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SANSON

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SANSON'S MEMOIRS.

VOL. I.

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MEMOIRS OF THE SANSONS

From Private Notes and Documents.

[1688-1847.]

EDITED BY

HENRY SANSON,

LATE EXECUTIONER OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE OF PARIS.

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I.

London:
CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY.
1876.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

IN PRESENTING this English version of the condensed memoirs of Henry Sanson and his family, a few prefatory remarks from the Translator are necessary.

Several years have now passed since this work was issued in French in Paris. Its appearance excited far more curiosity than the records of an ordinary executioner could have commanded. In fact the author was a personage in his own way. He was the lineal descendant of a race of headsmen through whose hands every State victim, as well as every common criminal, had passed during two centuries. They had exercised their functions for nearly two hundred years. They had hung, beheaded, quartered, and tortured from father to son without interruption, and the social position of the first of the race, previous to the assumption of the executioner's office, had placed his descendants on a somewhat higher level than the men belonging to the bloody profession. It was thought by all, that the last of the Sansons could not but have interesting things to relate. It is for the readers

of the present version to decide whether this idea was justified.

Howbeit, these memoirs are chiefly conspicuous for their historical interest. This alone would entitle them to a peculiar place. They certainly cannot be classed in the literature of horrors, and the Translator may be permitted to say that, had his opinion been different, he would not have put his pen at the service of such work. A certain amount of morbidness is obviously inseparable from a book of such a kind; but this, which the Translator has endeavoured to palliate, is redeemed by the constant link which unites the dark tales Sanson has to unfold with historical dramas.

The Translator has no sympathy for Sanson or his book, and he claims none for him. He may even say, without prejudicing these memoirs, that he credits neither the Executioner's emphatic and sentimental expressions of hatred for the principle he represents, nor the manifold virtues Sanson ascribes to his ancestors. He finds, as everybody must do, difficulty in believing that an individual need cut heads when he is compelled to do so neither by necessity nor by law, and Sanson's lamentations have left him unshaken in his belief.

But authenticity may justly be claimed for these memoirs. After proper research and inquiry, the Translator has no reason to doubt it. Sanson was not a profound scholar, but he knew enough to hold a pen

and note his impressions in the crude style in which the French version is indited. That the Executioner may have received assistance is possible, though the uncouthness of his work argues against the theory; that the authorship is genuine, at least in spirit, has been proved by Sanson himself, who on several occasions publicly contradicted reports that the memoirs published under his name were fictitious. Whatever opinions may be entertained of them, they are inspired, and in all probability written, by no other than the man who bore the historical name of Sanson.

It only remains for the Translator to state that wherever the 'Recollections' seemed to him to wander from the special object they have in view, he has not scrupled to abridge them.

INTRODUCTION.

ON March 18, 1847, I returned to my residence from one of the long walks of which I have always been fond. I had but just crossed the threshold when the porter gave me a letter.

I immediately recognised the large envelope and seal of which the sight had even sent a thrill through my frame. I took the ominous message with a trembling hand, and expecting that it contained one of those sinister orders I was bound to obey, I entered my house and went to my study, where I broke the fatal seal.

IT WAS MY DISMISSAL!

A strange and indefinable sentiment took possession of me. I raised my eyes to the portraits of my ancestors; I scanned all those dark, thoughtful faces, whereon was depicted the very despair which had hitherto haunted me. I looked at my grandfather, dressed in a shooting costume, leaning on his gun and stroking his dog—perhaps the only friend he had. I looked at my father,

his hat in his hand, and clad in the sable garb he had ever worn. It seemed to me that I was informing all these dumb witnesses that there was an end of the curse which had weighed on their race. Then, ringing the bell, I asked for a basin and water; and alone with God who sees in our hearts I solemnly laved those hands which the blood of my brethren was henceforth never to soil.

I then repaired to my mother's apartment. I can still see her in her velvet armchair, from which the poor old woman seldom rose. I placed on her lap the message from the Minister of Justice. She read it, and turning towards me her kindly eyes:

'Blessed be this day, my son!' she said. 'It frees you from the inheritance of your fathers.'

And as I remained speechless with such emotion as I could not control, she added:

'It must have come to this sooner or later. You are the last of your race. Heaven has only given you daughters; I was always thankful for it.'

On the following day eighteen competitors were postulating for my bloody functions; there was no difficulty in finding a substitute.

As for myself I had but one course to follow. I hastened to sell my ancient residence, full of sad recollections, wherein three out of seven generations had lived under opprobrium and ignominy. My horses, my

carriage—which bore as a coat of arms a cracked bell—I also got rid of. In short, I gave up all that could remind me of the past; and then, shaking the dust from my feet, I bade an eternal farewell to the hereditary abode in which, as my ancestors, I had never tasted peace in day and repose in night.

But for the advanced age and the infirmities of my mother, I should have gone to the New World. It was my chief wish to place the Ocean between me and the country where I had fulfilled such dismal functions. America, with its new manners, its virgin forests, its immense rivers, of which I had read in the works of Chateaubriand and Fenimore Cooper, was the land I longed to see. It seemed to me that by renouncing a name that had acquired such unwelcome celebrity, I could turn a new leaf of the book of life on setting foot on American soil. But I was bound by duty to abide in Paris. My aged mother would have insisted on accompanying me, and her strength must have been unequal to the fatigues of a sea voyage. I therefore remained with her to watch her and close her eyes which had shed so many bitter tears.

I was called upon only too soon to perform this sacred duty. Less than three years after my removal from the office of public executioner I had the grief to witness the death of the worthy and venerable woman who had given me, besides life, the benefit of her wise

advice and the example of her virtues. This was a sad blow for me, and it lay on my mind a long time. Time wiled away ; I became too advanced in years to cultivate the illusion of a new life. I was fain to give up my scheme of emigration.

However, I hastened to quit Paris, and I made choice of a retreat so safe and so secluded that nothing ever came to remind me of the melancholy occupation of my former life. I have lived there for twelve years under a name which is not mine, reaping with something like secret shame the friendship and good-will which I constantly fear to see dispelled by the discovery of my former avocations. But in this obscure shelter whither I had fled from my recollections, the past recurs to my memory with extraordinary lucidity; and, old as I am now, weary of a bleak and vain life, I have yielded to the strongest of temptations, that of writing the book of which these pages form the preface.

Idleness and solitude are no safe resorts for a morbid imagination. Constantly troubled with thoughts bearing on the predestination of my birth, on the first occupation of my life, my mind wandered back to the time of the adventure, to be told hereafter, by which a bequest, which, thank Heaven, I have transmitted to none of mine, came into my family. I remembered the line of ancestors among whom even a child of seven years was bound to the scaffold. My great-grandfather,

Charles Jean-Baptiste, born in Paris on April 19, 1719, succeeded to his father on October 2, 1726; and as so young a child could not possibly discharge the functions of executioner, the Parliament supplied him with an assistant and instructor named Prudhomme, but ordered that the child should sanction executions by his presence. A strange thing, indeed, was this regency in the history of the scaffold.

I thought of my grandfather, who had been compelled to wield the axe and the knife on the head of King, Queen, nobles, and *révolutionnaires* during the French Revolution. I had seen, in my youth, the hale figure of the old man. He had written a daily record of his terrible occupations, thus continuing the register in which my ancestors had inscribed the doings of our race.

In reading those singular annals, which, in my turn, I continued, and which begin by the Chamber of Torture and the *poudre de succession*, then dwell on the saturnalias of the Regency and of Louis XV.'s reign, and come to a conclusion in our century after passing through the French Revolution, I have found curious recollections at almost every page, anecdotes of the time, accounts of traditions carefully preserved in my family, a chaos of illustrious and abject names—the Count de Horn between Poulailler and Cartouche; Lally-Tollendal, and the Chevalier de la Barre next to Damiens; and

then, with a king as leader, the *cortége* of the victims of the Revolution. I was reminded of my conversations with my father concerning the Infernal Machine devised under the first Empire, the conspiracy of Georges Cadoudal, the Companions of Jehu, the Chauffeurs, &c.; and I also bore in mind the dramas in which it was my lot to take a part, the condemnation of the four Sergeants of La Rochelle, that of Louvel and of all the disciples of Jacques Clément, and Ravaillac, who vainly attempted to murder Louis Philippe. There was also the execution of Lesurques, the victim of a judicial mistake, and a more recent gang of the worst class of criminals, Papavoine, Castaing, Lacenaire, Soufflard, Poulmann. It struck me that in all this there was matter for a work whereof the interest and utility might in some degree conceal the individuality of the author.

I have therefore written the present book, appending to it a sketch of punishments in France, and an account of the office of Executioner. This book I now publish. If it had for purpose to furnish food for the unhealthy curiosity of people who would seek emotions in a kind of written photograph of the scenes that take place on the scaffold, it should be received with loathsomeness; but I would rather burn my writings than follow a course so contrary to my object. Far from this, I have been actuated in the course of my work by an abhorrence for the punishment denounced by so

many eloquent voices, the punishment of which I have had the misfortune to be the living impersonation. And now if it is asked how, with such sentiments, I could discharge so long my functions of headsman, I will merely refer the reader to the singular circumstances attendant on my birth. When I was yet a boy it was my bane to help my father; I was, as it were, brought up in the profession of my ancestors, and taught that I must abide by it as a matter of course. The sword of the law was transmitted from generation to generation in my family, as the sceptre in royal races. Could I select another calling without insulting my family and the old age of my father? I retained my office so long as was consistent with my wish to spare the feelings of my dearest kinsmen; and as soon as I could do so I gladly gave them up. All that I care for now is that in a short lapse of time those who read these pages may say, in putting down the book, that it is the will of capital punishment written by the last Executioner,

HENRY SANSON.

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OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

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MEMOIRS OF THE SANSONS.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN OF MY FAMILY.

My family came from one of the most ancient stocks in France. I heard from my grandfather that, having visited Milan, he discovered in the Ambrosian Library a number of documents in which a Sanson was mentioned as being Seneschal of the Duke of Normandy, better known as Robert the Devil, and as having joined a Crusade to the Holy Land. My grandfather was extremely fond of historical and archæological studies; he assured us that all the ancient chroniclers whose writings he had read, Villehardouin, Guy, Martial d'Auvergne, Rigaud and Joinville, designated the Sansons as bannerets of the Dukes of Normandy; that they had seen not only the Crusades, but the Conquest of England and the expeditions of Robert Guiscard and his sons, when these heroic Neustrian adventurers fought for the Pope against the Saracens, and founded the principalities and kingdoms of Southern Italy. This is a legend; and as no family, I may almost say no

nation, can possibly explain the mystery of its origin otherwise than by hypothesis and conjecture, I hasten to enter the more trustworthy demesnes of reality.

In the fifteenth century my family was established at Abbeville, and held a most honourable place in the history of the town. If I admit the accuracy of my grandfather's speculations, it seems certain that the Sansons were somewhat below their former splendour. At the time they belonged to the high and rich bourgeoisie, which was a link between the nobility and the *Tiers État*, and possessed, like the former, the privilege of serving the king, as officers, while the latter was deprived of municipal dignities and honours. Several Sansons filled the office of Échevin of Abbeville. One of the members of the family served Henry IV. throughout all his wars, and he was seriously wounded at Fontaine-Française, where the King of Béarn himself was well-nigh captured and slain by the Spanish cavalry. When the Peace of Vervins put an end to civil and foreign strife, this brave companion of the great Henry returned to his native town, and until his death, which occurred on May 31, 1593, was honoured with the esteem and veneration of his fellow-citizens. His grandson was one of the most remarkable men of the first part of the seventeenth century. His name was Nicolas Sanson. He may be said to have been one of the fathers of modern geography. Born in 1600, this illustrious man already enjoyed European fame, when Cardinal de Richelieu, who was no man to leave in a provincial town one who could help him in

his vast projects of transatlantic colonisation, assigned him a suitable pension, and honoured him with particular affection. Louis XIII. also appreciated the merit of the geographer, and Nicolas Sanson received many tokens of royal favour. The seductions of the Court, and Nicolas Sanson's connection with the most exalted personages of the time, often retained him in Paris; but the want of solitude and quiet frequently led him back to Abbeville. In 1638, when Louis XIII. entered this last town, he declined the offer of a resting place worthy of royalty, and preferred partaking of his geographer's hospitality. A King of France, a Bourbon, slept for two nights beneath the roof of a family which later was to bear a hand on another Bourbon in the name of a revolutionary law. A singular hazard indeed!

Charles Sanson de Longval, who became the first of the branch whereof I am the last representative, was the lineal descendant of Nicolas Sanson. I have now done with those of my ancestors who were men and citizens. It is time to speak of those who were headsmen.

CHAPTER II.

CHARLES SANSON DE LONGVAL.

CHARLES SANSON was born at Abbeville in 1635. His father and mother died when he was still in the cradle. He had a brother, Jean-Baptiste Sanson, who was born in 1624, and was therefore eleven years older than he. Their uncle, Pierre Brossier, sire of Limeuse, took the orphans under his protection. His kindness and tenderness greatly alleviated the melancholy of their situation. He had a daughter named Colombe; and he gave an equal share of affection to all three. Colombe Brossier and Charles Sanson were nearly of the same age. The intimacy of childhood made the ties of blood still faster and gave rise to mutual attachment. Their friendship became love. Neither Pierre Brossier nor Jean-Baptiste Sanson had any notion of the feelings of Charles and Colombe. And on a Sunday morning the former, having announced that he had just obtained for Jean-Baptiste the office of Councillor at the Court of Abbeville, informed his daughter that the new councillor sued her hand, and that he (Pierre Brossier) highly approved of the match—in fact, that this marriage had been one

of his long cherished projects, and that the sooner it was accomplished the better.

In those times, more than in ours, a father's will was law, and no other course but to submit was left to Colombe Brossier. Much against her wishes she was wedded to Jean-Baptiste a short time after. As to Charles Sanson, his grief was so deep that he resolved to leave Europe. He left his relation, went to Rochefort, and embarked for Quebec, where he was received by one of his father's sisters, who resided there. His affection, however, seems to have resisted the test of travels and novel sights, for he constantly refused to see again his native country, and only returned to France after the death of his brother Jean-Baptiste, and of his wife Colombe, which occurred a few years after his departure. Charles Sanson was by this time familiar with almost every part of the world; he had seen the West Indies, the whole of America and the Levant; but his disappointed affection had brought on a dark mood and a bitterness which became chronic, and he regarded the world in anything but a sympathetic disposition.

Shortly after his return to France, Charles Sanson betook himself to arms, the military profession being generally adopted by gentlemen of his station. He bought a commission in the regiment of the Marquis de Laboissière, took part in the battle of Gravelines and other encounters, and, under his full name of Charles de Longval, acquired in his regiment a reputation for great proficiency and courage. It was in 1662 that happened the strange adventure which led to his falling from his

high position to the degrading functions he transmitted to his descendants. I will now let him speak for himself, and give his manuscript account with its primitive orthography and roughness.

Manuscript of Charles Sanson.[1]

God, in His infinite goodness, measured on our shoulders the cross He wished us to bear; there is no misfortune, however heavy, to which one cannot be reconciled; and what at first appears to us as impossible for a man to accomplish as it is for him to swallow all the waters of the ocean, comes to pass by the mere strength of habit. After entering into rebellion against my fate, I have been led to suffer patiently the evil I did not deserve as well as the consequences of my imprudence, praying that my death should be less tainted than my life. But although children only subsist by the will of their parents, although they owe to them life and education, I apprehend that mine, before the singular difference they must find between their existence and that which they had a right to hope for at my hands, will murmur against their father; and before asking for God's mercy, I wish to confess my sins, and to state the reasons that led me to adopt the miserable profession of executioner, so that they may forgive me if I deserve forgiveness; and on Thursday, the eleventh day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and ninety-three, have I begun this confession.

[1] This singular document was written in archaic French.

My greatest misfortune was always to give to my passions supreme control over my will, and thus to render myself unworthy of the indulgence of the Lord, who, nevertheless, attempted more than once to guard me against the abyss whither I was running headlong.

A great affliction befell me in my youth; but far from struggling against it, and counteracting it by reason, penance and prayer, I found so much satisfaction in retaining the recollection of a passionate love that I would rather have given up my life than the remembrance of my folly; and thus I opened my mind to all the violent resolutions it pleased my heart to dictate to it.

In the year 1662 I was a lieutenant in the regiment of Monsieur le Marquis de Laboissière, which, after taking part in the campaign undertaken in 1658 under Monsieur le Vicomte de Turenne, in the course of which Bergues, Furnes and Graveline were taken, was quartered in the town of Dieppe.

In the month of July of the year 1662 the help of God had been very apparent in my favour; but while the Lord was freeing me from a dangerous peril for my soul, the eternal enemy of our salvation was leading me into another misadventure.

One day my life was much imperilled by a fall from my horse. I was carried to the abode of a poor man who lived in a house called the Clos-Mauduit, situate outside the walls of the town of Dieppe, beyond the cemetery, on the road of Neufchastel. This man behaved to me as the good Samaritan; he washed and dressed

my wounds, and only sent me away when I was cured. But I caught in his house an illness more serious than that which had brought me thither; I left it enamoured with a girl named Marguerite, who was my host's only daughter.

At first I tried not to think of her. Although the real profession of Marguerite's father was not known to me, it was obvious that he was of low condition; and being unable to marry the girl, I could not think of harming the daughter of a man who had been so kind to me. But the intentions of men are mere phantoms, and in spite of myself, I beheld night and day the image of the creature I upbraided myself for thinking of.

Soon after this, one of my cousins, named Paul Bertauld, came to Dieppe on business matters, being one of those who held the French possessions of India before the king, our sire, bought them for the benefit of the country. Although I disliked men on account of the misfortunes I had suffered on their account, and I preferred solitude to their society, I was very friendly to Paul Bertauld, whom I had known as a boy in the town of Quebec, when I went there on the king's vessels. Now, although Paul knew not the real reason of my melancholy and sullen humour, he tried to amuse me, and to find recreation for my behoof, both in his company and in that of a certain M. Valvins de Blignac, who, like me, held a lieutenancy in the regiment of the Marquis de Laboissière, and was a fine swordsman and a merry companion.

One autumn day, while we were dining together on

the sea-side, in the tavern of Isaac Crocheteu, my cousin Paul jocosely declared that before a month elapsed he would have for mistress the prettiest girl in the town of Dieppe and its suburbs. M. de Blignac, who was by nature a great flatterer, and who willingly indulged those whom he could cheat and who paid for his revels, confirmed Paul Bertauld's assurance, as if he knew the girl. Upon this I felt a sudden pang, and my heart began to throb, for I had remarked that my cousin wore the flower which bore the name of my beloved, and I suspected that he did so in her honour. It was folly in me, since, in result of my first love, I had vowed only to love God; neither had I seen Marguerite since my departure from her father's house; and moreover, Dieppe and its suburbs contained more than one girl called Marguerite, to whom my cousin's compliment might apply. But yielding, as it were, to a stronger will than mine, I left the table, and, pretending that I had business at the town castle, I left my companions, took the Braacquemont path, and arrived at the Clos-Mauduit, on the road of Neufchastel, where I had not been since the accident that had befallen me.

When I saw Marguerite's house through the trees of the garden, I had a mind to return; but, although I duly censured myself, I could not help advancing. I had seen her aged father twice; after curing me, he had forbidden me to return to his house, with all sorts of violent threats, which I attributed to his apprehension that I should make love to his pretty daughter. I therefore avoided the door, for fear he should

make her pay for my indiscretion; I went round the hedge, and, catching sight of her in the garden, I jumped over the enclosure and ran up to her. Falsehoods are easily devised and told by lovers. So I told the girl that, being unable to thank her father on account of his roughness, I wished to thank her in his place for his former kindness; and then, without any preparation, and as if I could not hasten too much to speak out, so fearful was I of being forestalled by some one else, I confessed my love to her.

The girl blushed, but was not angry; but I soon perceived that her eyes were full of tears, and as I asked her what made her cry, she replied that I could not love her, that my affection must bring down heavy calamities upon my head; and she ordered and beseeched me to go away, as her father might come out and see us.

Nevertheless, I remained with her for some time, repeating what I had said before; and I went back to town much disturbed. But I returned to the Clos-Mauduit on the following day, and I henceforth paid her regular visits. Sometimes I could not see her; either she was walking with her father in the garden, or the servant was there, so that I was obliged to keep back and look at her from a distance. Sometimes, however, she was alone, and however short our conversation I always went away more in love with Marguerite. And in truth this, my second folly, transcended the first one in vehemence. It was in vain that I blamed myself; in vain that I sought strength to resist in the recollection of my former lady-love.

Marguerite in no way encouraged my affection. The warmer it became the more she implored me to leave her. One day I tried to steal a kiss from her; she was so angry that I obtained her forgiveness with difficulty. Of course I had forgotten my cousin Paul and his boast.

One evening, however, as I was drinking with M. de Blignac, who was well-nigh tipsy, and I was laughing at him, and telling him that he could only cut a sorry figure in Paul's love adventure, if it happened, he winked knowingly and replied that, thanks to him, my cousin had obtained the good graces of the prettiest girl that could be seen. As, to my idea, none could be prettier than Marguerite, I became uneasy, and assailed him with questions. He at first refused to answer; but as among the bad qualities of the Chevalier de Blignac that of being the greatest prattler in the world could be reckoned, his tongue soon began to wag. He told me that the girl was unapproachable either for love or for money, and that, by his advice, M. Paul Bertauld had bought a sleeping draught at the apothecary's, and that it was to be divided on that very evening by the valet, whom they had bribed, between the maid and the beautiful girl. He added that the father and the valet would be away all night, and that the maiden would thus remain in my cousin's absolute power.

If the tower of the church of Saint Jacques had fallen on my head, I could not have been more appalled than I was by the words of M. de Blignac. I rose so

violently that I overturned the table and the glasses. My hat and sword were on a stool. I only took the sword, and unsheathing it, I ran madly through the town. By what instinct I was guided I know not, but I made my way through the dark night as unerringly as if it had been broad daylight, and after running for half an hour I saw a light through the trees of the Clos. At the thought that it might be dawning on the poor girl's disgrace, I felt so much rage and hatred that I could have battled against twenty. As I came close to the house, I saw the shadow of a man gliding along the wall. The man took to flight when he saw me, but I was soon up with him, and I ascertained that M. de Blignac had said the truth, and that the fugitive was no other than my cousin.

I took him aside, and, filled with anger and grief, I bitterly upbraided him for his dishonest conduct, showing him that it was a crime to lead to perdition a girl as respectable as she was poor, and that by stealing her virtue he was taking all that she possessed. My cousin hung his head and was silent. If we had remained alone, I doubt not but that I could have made him repent, for his vices were rather due to youth and evil associations than to nature. Unfortunately the appearance of M. de Blignac marred my lecture. The latter when I left him had some suspicion of what was going to take place, and he arrived in great hurry. I changed my tone, and speaking to him I indignantly told him what I thought of his conduct, adding that ever since M. Bertauld's arrival he had tried to lead him into evil, inciting him

to gamble, drink and misbehave himself in all kinds of ways.

M. de Blignac answered by laughing at my cousin for suffering my remonstrances; and he swore in his own bantering way that if I acted thus it was because I had my own views concerning the girl. He added that I should apologise for what I had first said, or that he would force my words down my throat; and, drawing his sword, he assailed me, calling on my cousin to do the same, and that the girl should be theirs still. Either love must have muddled his brain, or the taunts and mockery of M. de Blignac must have stung him to the quick, for M. Paul Bertauld was shameless enough to draw his sword against his relative and friend, and to charge me while his companion was doing the same. I did my best against such odds, retreating towards the trees. While I was manœuvring thus, however, M. de Blignac made a desperate lunge, which I parried, and before he could recover his balance I wounded him so seriously in the wrist, that his sword dropped to the ground, and, having set my foot upon it, I was enabled to take it and throw it far away. On the other hand M. Paul Bertauld had been wounded, and I had also been struck in the shoulder. Fortunately my two antagonists declined to continue the duel, and retired saying that it would be daylight on the next day, and they could then begin again without fear of getting blinded. Although I saw them retreat, I nevertheless resolved to guard the house all night for fear M. de Blignac, treacherous and perverse as he was, should

advise M. Paul Bertauld to return and pursue his original design during my absence.

At midnight, hearing no stir in the house, I began to apprehend that the sleeping draught had killed the girl and the servant; and this fear was the cause of my loss. The rascally valet, according to his agreement with Bertauld, had left the door ajar. I entered the house, and went to the poor child's room. Thereupon I confess with great shame and contrition that I forgot all the good advice, counsels and lessons I had just given to my cousin. When I saw the girl whom I loved, she appeared to me so beautiful that my good intentions vanished like smoke. I was neither wiser nor more discreet than he would have been, and I committed the crime for which I had upbraided him so bitterly.

May God forgive me in another world, since I suffer in this one for my sin!

On the next day, M. Paul Bertauld's servant brought me a message from his master, requesting my attendance on the Place du Puits-Salé. Inferring that he wished to call me out, I took my sword and followed the servant. There was a numerous attendance on the Place, and I was surprised that M. Bertauld had chosen such a spot to fight a duel. When I met him, however, he showed neither spite nor rancour for what had occurred. Far from this, he offered me his hand, which I refused to take, remembering how he had joined M. de Blignac in an unfair encounter. Upon this, he showed me a scaffold which was erected in the centre of the public place. He invited me to look in that direction, which

having done, I recognised my host of the Clos in a man who was chaining a few lads to the pillory. At the same time M. Paul Bertauld said he had heard that the coveted belle was the daughter of Master Pierre Jouanne, executioner of the towns of Rouen and Dieppe, and he thanked me for taking her, having no wish, he said, to have anything to do with the offspring of an executioner.

At this I could not refrain from drawing and attacking him. But there was such a multitude around us that we were immediately separated; and I retired much grieved to my quarters.

Although Master Jouanne had always appeared to me a man of strange temper, I had never imagined that he exercised a profession for which I felt loathing and contempt. And yet, in spite of my aversion for the father, I could not help thinking that it was unjust to punish the daughter for what was the consequence of those hazards which make us the children either of a king or of a shepherd; that the beauty and virtue of Marguerite made her far more worthy to be born near a throne than on the steps of a scaffold; that it was wicked to spurn so pretty and charming a girl because of her father's horrible occupations; and then I remembered my own crime of the preceding night, and, full of shame and remorse, I wept like a child.

As it was time to go to drill, I went out still undecided. Along the road I felt certain that my acquaintances turned away from me, and when I arrived at the castle I perceived that my brother officers greeted

me more coldly than was their wont. As, however, I had never been very friendly to anyone, their manner troubled me but slightly, and I went away, after drill, in a fit of musing. After walking for some time, I found that strength of habit had led my steps to the Clos-Mauduit. Marguerite was standing on the doorstep; and even if I had wished to turn back I could not have done so without breach of manners. I went up to her, and found her so pale and wan that my contrition was greatly increased. As her father was still engaged in the town, I walked by her side in the garden, scarcely daring to speak to her, but so joyful at being near her that I retired thinking how absurd it was to forsake a creature so fascinating, and that if Master Jouanne her father broke men on the wheel, there was not a drop of blood on the hands she allowed me to kiss.

And I returned to her on the morrow, and then on every day, although she was with me as reticent as ever, and I took good care not to boast of what I had done. My love increased so rapidly that I cherished her as much as if she had been a queen's daughter. Upon this it came to my knowledge that M. Valvins de Blignac, having recovered from his wound, was spreading calumnies about me; and the result was that one morning my brother officers pretended not to see me, and did not even take off their hats as I came forth. Much incensed, I went home to my lodgings, where my servant informed me that Blignac's falsehoods were the sole cause of my misadventure. I immediately went in quest of

a second, with the purpose of calling out Blignac. But everyone declined, without even giving me a reason for refusing; and even the pettiest officers took no pains to conceal the displeasure with which my request was received. In this predicament I thought the best way was to find out my antagonist, and I was about to request the assistance of a citizen-gentleman when my servant handed me a message from M. le Marquis de Laboissière, asking for my immediate attendance.

I obeyed the summons and found the Marquis in violent anger against me. He said, with many imprecations, that, not content with transgressing the edicts of the King, our sire, concerning duels, I disgraced the regiment by my disgusting affection for the daughter of the executioner; and, without allowing me to answer, he coupled some very odious epithets with the poor girl's name, speaking of her in such terms as I dare not repeat, out of respect for her memory. Hearing which, I could not control my very irritable temper, and I retorted so harshly to a man whose age and authority I was bound to respect, that M. le Marquis de Laboissière told me to leave the room, ordering me to remain under arrest at the Castle until he had acquainted the king with my conduct. This enraged me still more. I drew my sword and, bending it over my knee, I broke it, saying he could dispense with writing to the King to deprive me of my commission, as I would tear it with my own hands, as I had first broken my sword.

I then left him, but I took care not to abide long at my quarters for fear M. le Marquis de Laboissière should

have me arrested. I took what money I possessed, saddled my horse and rode out of town in great haste. I had resolved to go northward, and to embark in some ship for India. However, I would not go without bidding farewell to my mistress. I still retained the hope of deciding her to share my lot in a country where her father's vile profession could not haunt us. . . . I therefore took the direction of the Clos-Mauduit. I was surprised to find the house in a state of darkness, for it was not late. But on minutely examining the premises, I espied rays of light issuing from the apertures of the door of a kind of shed adjoining the house, and at the same time I heard a deep groan coming from the interior of the shed.

Although not easily moved to fear, I remember that I shuddered like a leaf. I tied my horse to a tree, looked through one of the apertures, and what I saw made my hair stand on end. Marguerite, my beloved Marguerite, was stretched on the leathern bed used for the infliction of torture; her cruel father, looking more like a tiger than like a man, had placed her foot in the boot of torture; and with his own hand he was striking a spike red with his daughter's blood; at each blow he repeated with rage, 'Confess! confess!' and the poor girl, throwing herself backwards with many tears and shrieks, implored God and the saints of paradise to bear witness to her innocence.

I only saw this cruelty for a moment, for I had picked up a small beam close by, and, Heaven giving me more strength than I thought I had, I smashed the

door into splinters at a single blow, as if it had been destroyed by a mine. When he recognised me, Master Jouanne threw away his mallet, and seizing the large sword which he used to decapitate noblemen he brandished it near his daughter's head, and vowed that if I stirred in her defence he would immediately strike her head from her shoulders. I fell on my knees, crying and moaning as poor Marguerite was doing when I entered. Master Jouanne then asked me my business, and wished to know whether I brought him the name of the seducer, which he sought to obtain by torment from his daughter. I replied by confessing my fault, showing him that I alone was guilty, and not his saint-like and virtuous daughter. Hearing which, this Master Jouanne, so ferocious and so cruel, sank before the bed of torment, bursting into tears; he unloosed the boot from his daughter's leg, and taking her foot between his hands, he kissed her wounds, imploring her pardon with so much grief that his despair would have drawn tears from a rock. At the same time he deplored the misfortunes to which the poor were exposed in this world, saying that Heaven should make poor girls ugly and frightful to look at, since neither virtue nor chastity could protect them from the noble and the powerful.

At this stage, I advanced and expressed my intention of leaving my country; and I further declared that I was ready to take Marguerite for my wife and companion. Master Jouanne showed himself more moved by my proposal than he had been hitherto; but he remained firm, and, turning to his daughter, he said it was

her business to answer. The poor girl, thus questioned, took those hands which had but just done her so much violent and bloody harm, kissed them, and said that as she was her father's only companion and supporter in his solitary life, she would not leave him, even if I offered her the throne of India, whither I proposed to take her.

Master Jouanne embraced his daughter very unctuously, and then showed me the door, saying that he was an executioner, not an assassin; that he would not kill me on that day, but that I should take care not to reappear in the town or neighbourhood if I cared for my life.

I hung my head and turned away to leave; but as my foot touched the threshold I heard behind me a deep sob, and, looking round, I saw that Marguerite had fainted in her father's arms. I rushed towards her; but Master Jouanne again pushed me back very roughly. Seeing by the state of his daughter that her soul was as troubled as mine was by this separation, and discovering that she loved me as much as I could love her, nothing could induce me to retire. I therefore proposed to the father to marry Marguerite, and that we should all go to some distant land, where we could live in peace.

But my proposal was no more approved of than my preceding offer. Jouanne answered that a tardy and unavailing change of profession could not prevent his son-in-law from despising him, and from imparting his contempt to his wife; and that, since his daughter had left her fate in her father's hands, he would only consent to our union if my love was strong enough to take a

share of the opprobrium and hatred which belonged to himself and his child; that without scruple I had dishonoured the executioner's daughter; and that I could only atone for my crime by becoming an executioner myself.

. . . . . .

My ancestor's confession comes to a sudden termination. He fails to give the conclusion of his adventure, as he abstained from giving an account of the events which preceded it. Colombe Brossier and Marguerite Jouanne had no doubt left two deep wounds in his heart, and these he only exhibited with grief and reluctance. He married Marguerite Jouanne; and I find in the official record of an execution which took place at Rouen a proof that the relentless Master Jouanne exacted from his son-in-law a stringent discharge of his engagements. The record says 'that, having to break on the wheel a certain Martin Eslau, Master Pierre Jouanne, principal executioner, having compelled his son-in-law, who was but lately married, to aim a blow at the culprit, the said son-in-law fell in a fit, and was hooted by the mob.'

The happiness which Charles Sanson had so dearly paid for passed away as a dream. His wife died, after giving birth to a son.

CHAPTER III.

ARRIVAL IN PARIS.

IT was towards the end of the year 1685 that my ancestor Charles Sanson de Longval quitted Normandy, leaving behind him the remains of that Marguerite Jouanne who had brought him so unfortunate a marriage portion. The events I have chronicled had almost disturbed his reason; he had fallen into a dark, fidgety mood, which increased the sinister appearance he owed to his avocations. At Rouen he was avoided with something like terror; when he passed through the streets, the inhabitants pointed out to each other the man who all over his person bore the marks of a stormy existence. Most ignored his trials; but a glance at Sanson was sufficient to identify him as the executioner; and men, women, and children recoiled from him.

For many reasons, therefore, my ancestor was not sorry to renounce his unpleasant celebrity, and to leave a spot replete with sad recollections. He hastened to accede to the proposal which was made to him of an exchange of his provincial jurisdiction for that of the capital of the kingdom. The time was fraught with grave events. Chancellor Letellier had just died, re-

signing his seals into the hands of President Boucherat, who was reputed a kind and honest man. The Marquis de Bullion, a perfect gentleman, had just been appointed Provost of Paris. Thus the magistracy was being altered at the two extremities of the social ladder in the persons of the Chancellor of France, the Provost of Paris, and the executioner.

The profound emotion caused by the sudden deaths which had thinned the Royal Family on the very steps of the throne, the mysterious doings of the Chambre-Ardente with regard to the subtle poison, borrowed of the Borgias, which had been styled *powder of succession;* all this excitement, we say, had just subsided; and nothing could have troubled the horizon, if an act of the worst policy—the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes—had not opened for the nation a new era of calamities. I shall not enter into any digression concerning this return to an intolerance which had already fed so many civil wars in France; I merely wish to allude to the effect this event had in Sanson de Longval's exceptional sphere. A declaration of the King decreed the most rigorous penalties against the dying who refused the Sacrament because they belonged to the Reformed Religion. It ordered that in case of recovery heretics should be sentenced to amende honorable, hard labour for life, and forfeiture of property; and in case of death, that their trial should nevertheless be proceeded with, and their bodies be dragged on a hurdle, and then thrown into the common sewer.

Another declaration enacted the same penalties

against the heretics who attempted to leave the country, as well as against those who abetted them. All the Protestant *émigrés*, and those reputed as such, were threatened with forfeiture when they returned to France after a brief delay, and a reward of 1,000 livres was promised to whoever could give information of or prevent a design of emigration. I hasten to add that such excesses of fanaticism were posterior to my ancestor's resolve to accept the office of executioner of Paris; otherwise I have no doubt he would have remained in Rouen. Moreover, these awful laws and posthumous penalties were little more than legal fictions, being enacted rather to intimidate than to be carried out. I find no trace of such sentences having been executed, in the papers left by Sanson de Longval. If real persecutions were devised at the time against the Protestants, it was in the provinces, not in Paris.

On his arrival, Sanson was disagreeably impressed by having to put up at the House of Pillory, or, as the people called it, the Executioner's Mansion. This abode, by no means a cheerful one, was a dark, octagonal construction, over which was placed a revolving cage, the whole edifice terminating in a sharp steeple. Before the door was a cross, at the foot of which bankrupts came to declare that they abandoned their property, after which they received a green cap from the executioner's hands. Around the house were shops which the executioner rented; and adjoining these were a stable and a kind of shed, under which the bodies of those who perished by the executioner's hand were deposited for a night.

During his short stay at the House of Pillory, my ancestor acquired a taste for anatomy; and his studies were not fruitless, for he consigned to writing many curious observations on the muscular system, and I have still some prescriptions of his for diseases of the joints. The study of anatomy and the manipulation of certain remedies were perpetuated in our family. None among us abstained from this practice; and the reader will be astonished at the enumeration, in the sequel of the present work, of the cures of patients who came to us for relief.

Sanson de Longval soon had enough of his official residence; and, as no law compelled him to live there, he sought suitable quarters in some remote part of Paris. The place now occupied by a part of the Faubourg Poissonnière was then an almost deserted spot called New France. The only buildings it contained was the convent of Saint Vincent de Paul, and a modest church patronised by St. Anne. Nowadays the church has been turned into a beershop, and the convent into a prison. Charles Sanson had a house erected near the Church of St. Anne, after letting the Executioner's Mansion for 600 livres—a large sum for the time.

The first years of Charles Sanson de Longval's residence in Paris were marked by no particularly interesting occurrence until the trial and execution of Madame Tiquet. I find many a page of blood in the annals of my family before reaching the account of this remarkable case; but even crime, it must be admitted, has its aristocracy, and I should far less interest my

readers by relating to them the execution of some obscure criminal than by the authentic details I am in a position to give as to a young woman whose fate engrossed the attention of the whole of Paris towards the end of the seventeenth century. Her trial, of which the termination was far more tragic, produced in those days as much sensation as that of Mdme. Lafarge in our time. For the sake of accuracy, I must, however, mention a few executions superintended by Charles Sanson. The culprits were: In 1685, Claude Vautier, broken on the wheel for theft and murder. In 1688, Jean Nouis fils, for the same crime. In 1689, François Mannequin, for false evidence: he was only one-and-twenty years of age, and during his trial he pretended that he was only seventeen, hoping to soften his judges. In 1690, Gabrielle Henry, wife of Jacques Piedeseigle, assistant major of Count de Chamilly, convicted of murder. In 1691, Urbaine Attibard, wife of Pierre Barrois, aged thirty-five, who, having poisoned her husband, was sentenced to amende honorable, to have her fist struck off, and to be hanged; her body to be burnt, and her ashes to be scattered to the wind. And lastly, Claire Lermenet, wife of Michel Cloqueteur, servant of M. de Breteuil, put to death, after horrible tortures, for common theft.

CHAPTER IV.

TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF MDME. TIQUET.

IN the first months of the year 1677 a strange event produced a profound sensation throughout Paris, and soon became the leading topic of conversation. A well-known and esteemed magistrate, M. Tiquet, escaped, as if by miracle, from a conspiracy against his life. After being fired upon by a number of murderers placed in ambush near his house, he fell insensible on the pavement, and but for the prompt action of his valet, who had heard the report of firearms, and rushed out to his master's help, he would probably have been despatched.

Much surprise was evinced when it became known that M. Tiquet, mindless of his desperate plight, had obstinately refused to be taken to his own house, and had preferred the hospitality of one of his lady friends, Mdme. de Villemur, to that of his own mansion, where, however, he knew that he could command the cares of his wife and of the two children he had had by her. This conduct, which, to say the least, was singular, might have given birth to rather unfavourable comments on the morality of the councillor, if far graver rumours had not furnished a quite different explanation. It was also

said that Mdme. Tiquet, on hearing of the crime, had gone to Mdme. de Villemur's house to see her husband; but that access to him had been denied her; and further, that when the magistrate sent to him to inquire into the crime had questioned him, M. Tiquet answered that, to his knowledge, the only enemy he had was his wife.

This was enough to awaken the curiosity of a population at all times greedy of scandal and domestic mysteries. The history of M. and Mdme. Tiquet was soon in every mouth. It ran thus: Angélique Carlier (Mdme. Tiquet) came from Metz, where she was born in 1657. Her father was a rich printer and bookseller; and at his death he left a fortune of 80,000*l.* to be divided between his daughter and her brother. The latter had been her only guardian. When she appeared in society, she was an accomplished person, and possessed great powers of fascination. Her beauty was striking, her education left nothing to be desired; in fact, her destiny promised to be one of unusual brilliancy. She was soon sought by a considerable number of suitors, among whom were rich and powerful men. But, either from her inability to make a choice, or because love was unknown to her heart, Angélique took a long time before she came to a decision. Her hesitation became favourable to M. Tiquet, a magistrate, who had come forward in the ranks of her admirers: his position as a councillor of Parliament tickled the girl's vanity, and she at length selected him. The plebeian name of Pierre Tiquet sufficiently testified that he owed his position as a magistrate to his own talents rather than to his birth; but at that

time mixed alliances were far less frequent than they eventually became, and Mdlle. Carlier could hardly aspire to a higher station than that which her husband offered her. As to M. Tiquet, he married both for love and for money. He had spared no means to arrive at his ends, and had gained the good graces of two powerful auxiliaries, Angélique's brother and one of her aunts who had some influence over the girl. With this help he surmounted the secret repulsion he inspired in Angélique, less, perhaps, on account of his grave and unattractive face than as a result of his age, which at the time exceeded the bounds of ordinary maturity, and of his rather vulgar name.

The counsels of her aunt and brother, and the prospect of becoming the wife of an exalted magistrate, triumphed over her real feelings, and she accepted M. Tiquet's hand. It was said that the latter, in order to hasten her determination, had resigned himself to an heroic effort of generosity. On Angélique's birthday he offered her a magnificent bouquet of which the flowers were mingled with diamonds and precious stones worth 15,000 livres (about 45,000 francs in our money). The honeymoon lasted nearly three years. Two children, a boy and a girl, were born, and nothing seemed to trouble the domestic peace of M. and Mdme. Tiquet. The lady, however, had expensive tastes; she had a fine establishment, carriages, horses, &c., and she also received in her drawing-rooms a brilliant, although rather mixed society. Her husband, whose only income came from his office, and who had made heavy debts in order to marry, occa-

sionally remonstrated with his wife on her ruinous taste, but without the slightest effect. His admonitions, at first tender and friendly, became imperative, but without avail. Angélique began to dislike her husband, and at last she got to hate him. Without being aware of it, her brother contributed to this revulsion of Angélique's sentiments for her husband. He introduced to her a friend of his, a young officer named M. de Montgeorges, captain of the French guards. The latter was young, handsome, of martial gait and imposing stature, and gifted with elegant manners; and he contrasted favourably with the morose husband of Mdme. Tiquet. The handsome officer made an impression on her heart. The daily disputes with Tiquet made her still more accessible to her dawning passion. Mdme. Tiquet was soon intimate with Montgeorges, and if anything could atone for her fault, it was its singularity and the fact that she was true unto death to her lover.

Mdme. Tiquet was imprudent enough to make no mystery of her amours. In the violence of her passion she forgot everything, and the councillor was soon apprised of the conduct of his wife. Great was his surprise, and great also was his anger. He began by turning out Montgeorges and making away with Madame's evening parties. This act of domestic authority was not calculated to restore harmony in the household. Angélique vowed she would never submit to the kind of life her husband wished to impose upon her, and that all his efforts would tend to free her. This appeared to her the easier as her fortune belonged to her. Unfortu-

nately she found ready auxiliaries in her brother and aunt. At the instigation of the latter, an army of creditors assailed Tiquet, and obtained against him sentence after sentence. On her side Mdme. Tiquet lost no time in demanding a judicial separation. The husband was not the less active on his own behalf. He complained of the scandalous conduct of his wife, excited the compassion of his brother councillors, and by the intermediary of M. de Novion, the President of Parliament, he at length obtained a lettre-de-cachet (a blank order for imprisonment to be filled up by the holder) against Angélique. Henceforth he thought he was the master, and attempted to dictate to his wife. He ordered her to be more submissive, if she cared for her liberty, never to see again the handsome captain, and to stay all proceedings for separation. Angélique could not keep her temper. She bitterly insulted her husband; and as M. Tiquet, stung to the quick, was triumphantly showing his lettre-de-cachet, saying that he would make immediate use of it, Angélique tore it from his hand and threw it into the fire.

M. Tiquet's rage and disappointment were supreme. He made vain attempts to procure another lettre-de-cachet; but his solicitations only met with laughter and irony. The luckless councillor became the laughing-stock of Paris: and this might have pacified his wife. She, however, persisted in her intention of separating from him. It was then that she devised a criminal plan for getting rid of her husband, so as to marry Montgeorges, whom she still continued to see, after Tiquet's

narrow escape. She communicated her murderous object to Jacques Moura, her porter, who became her accomplice. Many others, whose names it is of no use to give, joined in the plot. On the evening appointed for the crime, all the accomplices were posted on Tiquet's way; but at the last moment Angélique was undecided, and out of remorse or fear she countermanded the execution of the plot. As to the councillor, although he had no suspicion of the criminal designs of his wife, he became more and more jealous. Suspecting the honesty of his porter, Jacques Moura, he dismissed him with many reproaches and threats, and being unwilling to entrust the door to anyone, he actually became the porter of his own mansion, receiving only well-known persons, taking the key away with him when he went out, and concealing it under his pillow during the night.

This minute inquisition and almost complete imprisonment exasperated Mdme. Tiquet, and threw her again into morbid ideas of murder. One day the old councillor was ill, in his room; his wife, suddenly becoming affectionate, sent him by her valet a cup of broth she had prepared herself; but the shrewd servant, guessing his mistress's design, made a pretence of stumbling, dropped the cup, and left the house. Tiquet knew nothing of this second attempt. Mdme. Tiquet was not discouraged, and still entertained sinister intentions.

A few nights after this adventure M. Tiquet was in the company of Mdme. de Villemur, who lived in a house not far from his, while his wife remained at home with the Countess de Lénonville. As M. Tiquet emerged

in the street, several shots flashed through the darkness, and he fell, struck by five bullets. None of the wounds, however, were mortal.

On the following day Mdme. Tiquet rose early, and, probably to avert suspicion, she paid a visit to her friend, Mdme. d'Aunay. The latter asked her whether M. Tiquet suspected any one. 'Even if he knew them,' answered Angélique, 'he would take care not to say so. Ah, my dear friend, to-day it is my turn to be murdered!' Mdme. d'Aunay tried to calm her by assuring her that so foul a charge could never be brought against her. 'The best thing they can do,' she added, 'is to arrest the porter your husband dismissed the other day. He may very well have committed the crime out of revenge.'

These words struck Mdme. Tiquet; she saw all that she could make, for her own defence, out of the dismissal of Jacques Moura, who had more than once expressed the greatest vindictiveness with regard to his former master, and had uttered threats against him. She resolved to remain in Paris, and turned a deaf ear to the advice that was given to her on all sides. A monk offered to disguise her, and take her to Calais, where she could embark for England. Angélique steadily refused, but in spite of her apparent security she felt anything but safe. One morning she was conversing with the Countess d'Aunay, who, being convinced of her innocence, was faithful to her to the last. As the Countess was about to retire, Mdme. Tiquet kept her back, saying that she had a foreboding that she was going to be arrested, and she should like her friend to be present. Hardly had she uttered these

words when the criminal lieutenant entered, followed by a number of archers. Mdme. Tiquet remained unmoved. She asked leave to embrace her youngest son, followed the lieutenant, and during the whole of the way showed extraordinary calm and serenity. She was taken to the little, and then to the great Châtelet. The indictment preferred against her was drawn up with unusual expedition.

As soon as Angélique's arrest was known a man named Auguste Cathelain spontaneously declared that three years before he had received money of Jacques Moura, commissioned by Angélique, to join in the murder of M. Tiquet. Jacques Moura and the informer himself were arrested. They were confronted with the chief prisoner; no proof, however, could be adduced that they were the authors of the last attempt; but proofs were not found wanting concerning the first plot. And, strange to say, the conspiracy which had not been carried out became the basis of the charge against Mdme. Tiquet.

Sanson de Longval had followed all the phases of this celebrated affair with painful interest, for he but too well foresaw that work was being prepared for him. It was with grief that he heard, on June 3, 1699, that a sentence of the Châtelet 'condemned Angélique-Nicole Carlier to be decapitated in the Place de Grève; Jacques Moura, her late porter, to be hanged; their property to be confiscated, and from Angélique's property ten thousand for the benefit of the King, and one hundred thousand livres for that of Tiquet, her husband, to be extracted.'

This sentence, of which I have given the textual wording, caused much sensation, although it was felt that something must intervene before it was carried out. M. Tiquet appealed to the Parliament, on the plea that only 100,000 livres had been awarded to him and to his children. He asked that an additional 15,000 livres should be taken from his wife's fortune and handed over to him. The Parliament was not deaf to the prayer of one of its own members. By a decision taken on June 17, 20,000, instead of 15,000, livres were awarded to Tiquet. But the remainder of the sentence was confirmed. This decision was much criticised. The public felt that the Parliament exacted too harsh a retribution for the crime committed against itself in the person of M. Tiquet. After all, the victim had recovered; M. Tiquet was quite well again, and no proof tended to show that Angélique was responsible for the second attempt on her husband's life. And then Mdme. Tiquet was handsome, witty, and accomplished, and she belonged to the best society; her love passages with Montgeorges, to which the trial had attracted general attention, her ill-assorted union with an old man, to whom she had sacrificed her youngest years, and many other things besides, contributed to make her interesting. Her fate excited much compassion, and on all sides it was hoped that royal clemency might spare so touching a victim.

It was said that M. Tiquet himself went to Versailles with his two children, and threw himself at the feet of Louis XIV. Having failed to obtain either his wife's reprieve, or some mitigation of her punishment, he asked

that the whole of her property should be remitted to him. This he obtained. But the cupidity manifested by the old councillor on this as on other occasions excited universal indignation; and this naturally gave rise to a corresponding amount of interest and sympathy on Mdme. Tiquet's behalf. Her brother also was moving heaven and earth to save her. Thanks to his high connections, he induced the most powerful persons to intercede in her favour; and Louis XIV. might have yielded but for the stubborn opposition of the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal de Noailles.

All hope being lost, my ancestor could only expect a prompt requisition of his services. The execution was appointed to take place on the day after the Fête-Dieu. The altars erected in the public places and streets had but just been removed, when Sanson de Longval arrived on the Place de Grève to see the scaffold erected. An immense crowd witnessed these sinister preparations.

Meanwhile Mdme. Tiquet was led into the chamber of torture, where, in the presence of the criminal lieutenant, her sentence was read to her without bringing a tinge of paleness to her cheeks. Deffita, the criminal lieutenant, was one of Angélique's former admirers. He could barely contain his emotion; but nevertheless he thought fit to address to the victim a few words of exhortation. The poor woman could hardly forbear from comparing the times when this magistrate was sighing at her feet, with the present occasion. 'I am not afraid to die,' she said. 'The day which brings my life to an end sees the last of my misfortunes. I do not

defy death, but I hope to bear it with resignation, and God will perhaps do me the favour to permit me to preserve on the scaffold as much calmness as I have shown during my trial and in this room where my sentence has just been read to me.'

The lieutenant then implored her to confess her crime and to reveal the names of her accomplices, so as to avoid the horrors of torture. At first she peremptorily refused. But, after drinking the first jugful of water, her fortitude forsook her as she saw the preparations for other tortures, and she at length confessed everything. When she was asked whether Montgeorges had taken part in the crime: 'Good heavens, no!' she exclaimed; 'if I had told him of it, I should have lost his esteem, which was dearer to me than life.' She was then handed to the Abbé de la Chétardie, her confessor. He took a place beside her in the fatal cart, where was also Jacques Moura, accompanied by a priest. The *cortége* slowly wedged its way through the multitude of spectators, and reached the Place de Grève. As was usual, Mdme. Tiquet was clad in spotless white, and her dress enhanced the splendid beauty she still retained, in spite of her forty-two years, and of her terrible trials. The cart had scarcely halted before the scaffold when a violent storm burst. The execution was momentarily deferred. For half an hour Angélique had before her the apparatus of death and a hearse drawn by her own horses, which had been sent by her family to take away her body.

The fatal moment was at hand. Jacques Moura was executed first. When Angélique's turn was come, she

advanced, gracefully bowing to my ancestor, and holding out her hand, that he might help her to ascend the steps. He took with respect the fingers which were soon to be stiffened by death. Mdme. Tiquet then mounted on the scaffold with the imposing and majestic step which had always been admired in her. She knelt on the platform, said a short prayer, and, turning to her confessor, 'I thank you for your consolations and kind words; I shall bear them to the Lord.'

She arranged her head-dress and long hair; and, after kissing the block, she looked at my ancestor, and said:

'Sir, will you be good enough to show me the position I am to take?'

Sanson de Longval, impressed by her look, had but just the strength to answer that she had only to put her head on the block.

Angélique obeyed, and said again:

'Am I well thus?'

A cloud passed before my ancestor's eyes; he raised with both hands the heavy two-edged sword which was used for the purpose of decapitation, described with it a kind of semicircle, and let the blade fall with its full weight on the neck of the handsome victim.

The blood spurted out, but the head did not fall. A cry of horror rose from the crowd.

Sanson de Longval struck again; again the hissing of the sword was heard, but the head was not separated from the body. The cries of the crowd were becoming threatening.

Blinded by the blood which spurted at every stroke, Sanson brandished his weapon a third time with a kind of frenzy. At last the head rolled at his feet. His assistants picked it up and placed it on the block, where it remained for some time; and several witnesses asserted that even in death it retained its former calmness and beauty.

CHAPTER V.

PAMPHLETS UNDER LOUIS XIV.

I HAVE now to relate a lamentable history which dwells on a time posterior to the death of Mdme. Tiquet; but as the events which led to it are anterior to this lady's execution, I am compelled to return on my steps as early as the first half of Louis XIV.'s reign. The sun which the great King had taken for his emblem was beginning to pale.

The Augsburg league had just given the last blow to the public funds, already exhausted as they were by thirty years' war and extravagant prodigality. France had conquered at Fleurus, Nerwinden, and La Marsaille; but she was tiring of glory, and calculating the cost of such victories. Likewise the disaster of La Hogue, the failure of the campaign of 1693 which Louis XIV. led in person, had shown at home as well as abroad that, after all, the monarch was only a human being. The accomplishment of the French unity which he received from the hands of Richelieu, and which he so gloriously achieved, was not completed without difficulty. Louis XIV. committed a grievous mistake. After introducing unity into his government, he wished to

extend it to the consciences of his subjects. On October 17, 1685, he had revoked the Edict of Nantes and covered France with those singular apostles whom Louvois called his *booted missionaries.* In January 1686 another edict deprived the Protestants of the right of keeping their children. The 'heretics' emigrated in large numbers. Those who abjured retained deep hatred for the despotic power which oppressed them. It was then that the revolutionary spirit of the nation awoke. Popular revendication commenced; it was inaugurated by the warfare of pamphlets. These attacks became the more dangerous because the personal prestige of Louis had not survived the greatness of the monarch. The chivalrous lover of La Vallière, Fontanges, and Montespan had espoused, in 1684, the widow of Scarron the cripple. This sudden fall of the demigod gave a fearful weapon to his adversaries, and the pamphleteers made prompt use of it. In 1689 a pamphlet entitled the 'Sighs of Enslaved France for Liberty' produced a great effect. The liberal aspirations which it contained were so new that, although it was couched in rather dogmatic terms, the most superficial minds were captivated by them; and for some time there was a real struggle between the public and the police, who with equal avidity searched for copies of the pamphlets; the former to read, the latter to destroy them. This affair, of course, led many people to the Bastille or to the torture-chamber.

If the government of Louis XIV. had been severe in all such attempts against the majesty of the throne, it

became pitiless with those who dared attack the companion chosen by the King. The latter was doubtless aware that in marrying Mdme. de Maintenon he had made a political mistake ; but he was so spoilt by adulation that the most enormous crime was to remind him of his error. In 1694 a few copies of a libel entitled the 'Ghost of M. Scarron' were circulated in Paris and Versailles. The pamphlet was adorned with an engraving which parodied the monument raised by Marshal Lafeuillade, on the Place des Victoires, to the glory of his master. Instead of having four statues chained at his feet, the King was represented chained between four women : La Vallière, Fontanges, Montespan, and Maintenon.

It was among the princes of the blood and at the Court that the *old* woman, as the Palatine Princess called her, had most enemies. This hatred defeated the vigilance of the police ; before the prefect, M. de la Reynie, knew of the existence of the work, the King found a copy under his napkin at breakfast, and Mdme. de Maintenon received another copy at the same time and in the same way.

This outrage, inflicted, as it were, in the midst of his palace, exasperated Louis XIV. M. de la Reynie was immediately called to Versailles ; the King bitterly upbraided him for what he called his guilty indifference, and ordered him to discover the authors of the libel and to punish them without pity.

Either the persons who had given cause for royal anger were very powerful and clever, or the means of action of a lieutenant of police were limited, for the best

agents of M. de la Reynie were unsuccessful. Still, the King was as angry as ever ; he even seemed as vexed at the failure of his agents as at the insult, and whenever he saw the lieutenant he did not spare his reproaches to that unfortunate official.

At length chance smiled on M. de la Reynie, who saw his disgrace fast drawing near. One morning he was carelessly listening to the complaint of an artisan, from whose dwelling 5,000 livres had been stolen the day before. The poor fellow obviously took the lieutenant for Providence itself, and, supposing that he could get his money restored, he was loud in his lamentations. While he was speaking, the secretary of the lieutenant entered and hurriedly handed a letter to this magistrate, begging him to read it at once.

The lieutenant had scarcely glanced at the paper than he jumped in his arm-chair with every sign of strong excitement. At his bidding the secretary went in quest of a police officer, while M. de la Reynie was feverishly writing a few lines on a piece of parchment bearing the seal of the State.

His emotion was so great that he altogether forgot the presence of a third party ; and he did not notice that the despoiled artisan, who was standing within a yard of him, could read every word he was writing. The man was looking on with the candid confidence of one who is so convinced of the importance of his business that he cannot doubt but that the magistrate is engrossed by it ; but the secretary, who had returned with an officer, roughly pulled him back.

M. de la Reynie looked up and appeared disagreeably surprised by the presence of the artisan.

'Write down your name,' said he in a harsh voice; 'your affair shall be seen to.'

Profound astonishment appeared on the face of the man; he hesitated for a few seconds, went to the table, took up a piece of paper and a pen, and then turning round:

'Allow me to observe, monseigneur,' said he, 'that I have had the honour to acquaint you with my name and occupation; and further, that you remembered my words so well that I was marvelling at the strength of your memory when, a moment ago, I saw you writing my name down as correctly as I could do.'

M. de la Reynie bit his lip, and made a sign to his secretary to draw closer to the artisan.

'Your name is Jean Larcher,' said he to the latter.

'It is, monseigneur.'

'You are a bookbinder of the rue des Lions-Saint-Paul.'

'Monseigneur is quite right,' answered poor Jean Larcher, who was smiling, while he crumpled in his fingers the piece of paper he was about to write upon.

M. de la Reynie was smiling also, although in a different way. He took the police officer aside, whispered a few words in his ear, and then introducing him to the bookbinder: 'This gentleman,' said he, 'will accompany you to your house; he will do all in his power to discover your thief, and we shall take care that you meet with such justice as is due to you.'

The lieutenant laid stress on these last words, and the bookbinder, astounded at meeting with so gracious a reception from a high magistrate, could hardly find words to express his thanks and gratitude. He left the residence of the lieutenant of police without any other apparent escort than that obligingly tendered by M. de la Reynie. On the way the police officer questioned the bookbinder, who furnished him with all the information he had already given to the lieutenant, not omitting to give the topography of his house, concerning which his companion seemed particularly interested. Master Jean Larcher was overjoyed at the great attention shown by M. de la Reynie's man: he did not doubt but that his 5,000 livres would soon be returned to him, and he insisted on regaling his companion with the best wine they could procure in a wine shop.

After this halt they went in the direction of the rue des Lions-Saint-Paul. Soldiers and policemen were standing around the bookbinder's house. The good man manifested more satisfaction than surprise at this military display. He observed to his companion that if his house had been as well guarded on the preceding night, so many good people would not have to be troubled now. The house inhabited by Larcher was narrow, but rather deep. It consisted of a ground floor composed of two rooms, one on the street side which was used as a shop and dining-room, the other being a workshop. An alley led to a staircase which communicated with the first floor, composed of two more rooms. One of these was Master Larcher's bedroom;

the other contained the books and papers reserved for binding. To this last room the police officer asked to be taken. But while Larcher was showing the cupboard wherein his money had been secreted, M. de la Reynie's man took quite another direction, and climbing up to the top of another cupboard, he brought down a small bundle of pamphlets upon which a commissaire, who suddenly turned up, pounced like a vulture.

Master Larcher, greatly astonished that so much attention should be given to what appeared to him of no import concerning his own business, was pulling the officer by the sleeve to show him how the cupboard had been forced open. But this last gentleman's manners towards him had considerably changed; he hardly listened to the man who, a few moments before, was treated by him as an intimate friend.

However, the commissaire began to question the bookbinder. He showed him the pamphlets, and asked if they were his property.

In his impatience, Master Larcher answered with some rashness that all that was in the house belonged to him or to his clients. The commissaire then untied the bundle, took a copy of the pamphlet, thrust it under Larcher's eyes, and asked where it came from.

When he read the title of the pamphlet, 'M. Scarron's Ghost,' of which he, as well as others, had heard, he turned white, trembled, took his head in his hands, and for a few moments remained quite stupefied. He, however, recovered his powers of speech and swore that he had no knowledge of the presence of the fatal pam-

phlets in his shop, and that he now saw them for the first time. M. de la Reynie's people shrugged their shoulders disdainfully. In vain did he repeat his assertions and try to exculpate himself by reminding them that he himself had brought the police to his house with the calmness of a faultless conscience. The officers told him he could explain himself before his judges ; and they prepared to take him away.

In a corner of the apartment, Jean Larcher's wife, concealing her face in her apron, was weeping and giving every token of violent grief. As Larcher was crossing the threshold, he begged the officer with whom he had been at first on friendly terms to allow him to say farewell to the woman he hardly hoped to see again. Hardened as he was, the policeman could not refuse this slight favour ; he signed to his men to relent, and the unfortunate husband exclaimed, ' Marian, Marian ! ' But Madame Larcher's sobs became more violent, and she did not seem to hear her husband's call. Those who stood around her pushed her towards the prisoner; she hesitated, and then rushing into Larcher's arms she embraced him with many demonstrations of grief and tenderness.

The woman's hesitation had not escaped the officer's eye ; he also remarked that Mdme. Larcher was crying in the way of children ; that is, that her eyes were dry, and that not one tear trickled down her cheeks. This struck him as so extraordinary that he began to suspect that Jean Larcher's innocence might, after all, be more genuine than that of the miscreants it was his wont to

apprehend. When his prisoner was safely confined in the Châtelet, he imparted his suspicions to M. de la Reynie. He reminded him that it was an anonymous letter which denounced Jean Larcher, and indicated the precise spot where the pamphlets were concealed ; he related what he had seen, and expressed his conviction that the unfortunate bookbinder was the victim of some conspiracy. But the lieutenant of police had already announced the man's arrest to the King, who had congratulated him on his capture ; he held his culprit, and he was no man to relinquish his prey for a shadow ; that is to say, for the uncertain chances of an enquiry.

If divers circumstances told in the prisoner's favour, there were heavy considerations on the other side. Before he was found in possession of the libel which had baffled the search of the police, Jean Larcher had seriously misbehaved himself. He was a convert to Protestantism, and had allowed his son to remain faithful to his family creed and to take refuge in England against persecutions. To this 'crime' he added another—that of remaining in constant communication with his child.

Jean Larcher appeared alone at the bar. He was tortured three times, and he suffered with more firmness than might have been expected of a poor man already advanced in years. He constantly refused to name his accomplices. When questioned he said that the death of one innocent man was enough for his judges, and that he had no wish that, through him, the latter should have to answer for more blood.

Sentenced to be hanged, he was led to the gibbet on

Friday, November 19, 1694, at six o'clock in the evening. He was seated in a cart with a man named Rambault, a printer of Lyons, convicted of a similar crime. Larcher was fidgety, and seemed filled with thoughts not relating to his approaching end. He however behaved with courage, and died protesting his innocence.

Before dying he earnestly begged Sanson to take a scapulary he had, and to give it to his son if he claimed it. Some years after, my ancestor had an opportunity of accomplishing the poor man's wish. It led to a fearful tragedy, and at the same time to the demonstration of the bookbinder's innocence. The scapulary contained the name of a man who was Master Jean Larcher's assistant. Nicolas Larcher, the son, who had been in England, discovered that his mother had married the man designated by his father as the culprit. Seized with frenzy, he broke into their house in the dead of the night, and murdered both his mother and her second husband. The young man was arrested, but died in prison of brain fever.

In 1699 my ancestor had passed his sixty-fourth year. Hitherto he had borne his lot with manly and severe resignation; but he suddenly broke down. He began to abhor the solitude he liked so much. He was uneasy, and started at the slightest noise; silence filled him with awe. Darkness caused him such terror that he constantly kept a lighted lamp near his bedside. This change became so alarming that his friends and his son, who had reached manhood, advised him to choose

another partner, whose presence and cares might soften the bitterness of his last days. Some time before he had been able to appreciate the qualities of Jeanne Renée Dubut, daughter of Pierre Dubut, upholsterer, of the rue de Beauregard. Touched by the friendship and devotion she had shown him, my ancestor married her on Saturday, July 11, 1699.

Jeanne Renée to a certain extent realised the hopes of the few who were attached to Sanson de Longval. But his quietude seems to have been of short duration. He resigned his office into his son's hands, for anything that reminded him of the functions he had discharged for so many years filled him with fear and horror. The sight of a drop of blood threw the old executioner into nervous fits which appalled all those who witnessed them.

He could bear to sojourn in Paris no longer; he soon retired with his second wife to a small farm at Condé, in the Brie district, which he had bought, and where he at length found the only repose our like can hope for—death.

In spite of minute searches and enquiries I have been unable to ascertain the exact date of his death. The municipal record of the little village which saw the last of Charles Sanson has, naturally enough, disappeared, and his last day was not recorded in his son's notes.

CHAPTER VI.

CELLAMARE'S CONSPIRACY.

SANSON'S son, whose Christian name was Charles, like his father's, took official possession of the functions he had discharged for the last five years, on September 8, 1703. He was of a mild and gentle disposition, and by temper and appearance was much like his mother, Marguerite Jouanne. On April 30, 1707, he married Marthe Dubut, his stepmother's sister. No astonishment need be felt at both father and son espousing two sisters, when it is remembered that Sanson de Longval married at an advanced stage of life, and that he took his wife only as a companion of his old age. Moreover, I may observe that, in our unfortunate profession, we could hardly choose our wives out of our own sphere, and that, as with accursed races, our families perpetually mingled and intermarried in such a way as to unite in the same person divers degrees of relationship which usually exclude each other. Thus, by this marriage, Sanson de Longval's widow became the sister-in-law of her stepson, and the young person Charles Sanson married was previously, in some degree, his aunt.

I can make these anomalies more apparent by enu-

merating the persons who were present at the wedding. On one side were a second Marguerite Jouanne, widow of Jean Baptiste Morin in the first place, and in the second of Nicolas Levasseur, both executioners, qualified in the act of marriage as my ancestor's maternal aunt; Jeanne Renée Dubut, widow of Charles Sanson de Longval, his stepmother, and sister of the bride; Nicolas Lemanchand, executioner at Mantes, cousin of the bride, through Marie Levasseur, his wife; and Noël Desmasures, usher of the Châtelet, friend. On Marthe Dubut's side were Pierre Dubut, her father; Elizabeth Voisin, his second wife; Gilles Darboucher, greengrocer, who had married a sister of Dubut's first wife, and was, therefore, uncle of Marthe; and lastly, Marguerite Guillaume, widow of André Guillaume, one of the King's officers.

It may be seen that the second Marguerite Jouanne had only been able to find executioners for husbands, that Marie Levasseur had the same fate, and lastly that Marthe Dubut could not pretend to a higher union than her eldest sister's. The gibbet and the axe were in the dowry of these poor women when they went to the altar.

Charles spared no means to brighten Marthe Dubut's existence. The emoluments of the executioner were then considerable; they amounted, chiefly through the right of *havage*, to not less than 60,000 livres. My second ancestor was, therefore, enabled to surround his young wife with all the comforts and elegances of life.

Shortly after his marriage he left the old house of New France. His notary, Master Touvenot, purchased for him a superb dwelling situate at the corner of the Rue des Poissonniers and the Rue d'Enfer, now the Faubourg Poissonnière and the Rue Bleue. It is the house which forms the corner of the Rue Papillon and Rue Bleue, but it would be difficult to discriminate the features of the old house amidst the changes and improvements that have taken place in it. In my ancestor's time it was a large mansion between court and garden, built on grounds of twelve acres in extent. Behind the mansion were immense gardens, picturesquely laid out, of which a part, planted with shrubs and trees, had the appearance of a real park.

This property belonged to M. Paul Antoine-Caignet, on one part, and on the other to Charles-Auguste Angenont, equerry, when Charles Sanson bought it through M. Touvenot's agency. It remained in the family until my grandfather sold it in 1778 to two gentlemen named Papillon and Riboutte. These gentlemen gave their names to the two streets they constructed on the land occupied by the shady paths of the garden of my ancestors. I am sure that few of the inhabitants of these streets know that their dwellings are erected on the spot where the former executioners of Paris used to stroll, after accomplishing their bloody work.

The rate of land had increased so much in 1778 that my grandfather sold for more than 100,000 livres the house and grounds, for which Charles Sanson

had only given 6,000. In his time it was an almost lordly dwelling; the building, two stories high, was preceded by a large court, surrounded with adjoining constructions of all kinds, sheds, stables, coach-house, hot-houses, &c. On the ground floor was a hall, giving access to the garden by a double staircase; on the right of the hall the kitchens; on the left, the dining and drawing room; on the first floor my ancestor's apartments; and on the second floor the servants' rooms.

The garden was one of those marvels such as the agglomeration of modern cities no longer allows. One part of it was converted into beds of flowers, which bloomed along the paths; beyond was a series of unequal squares, carefully separated by sanded alleys, which were bordered with fruit trees. A large sward occupied the middle of the garden. At the other end of the grounds were clusters of trees symmetrically pierced with one large path, and four lateral paths, above which the boughs of the trees met and formed the thickest shade.

In this charming house Charles Sanson spent his life with Marthe Dubut, his wife. He lived there humbly and quietly, forgetting, as well as he could, the avocations and bent of his existence. I am not aware, however, that he justified the apprehensions which had poisoned the last years of Sanson de Longval, and ever regretted his fate.

From 1703 to 1716, the list of executions of the second Sanson is almost exclusively composed of

obscure names, connected with vulgar crimes. Cupidity is always their chief motive, and murder the means of execution. A few highway robbers, Licaon, La Chesnaye, Muillart, Arpalin, Petit-Jacques, hardly relieve the monotony of this nomenclature by the audacity of their deeds.

Louis XIV. died in 1715; the throne devolved to a child five years old, and the Regency, which the late King wished to confide to the Duke du Maine, fell to the Duke of Orleans. After the splendours of his reign, and perhaps on account of such splendours, Louis XIV. left France humiliated and ruined. The task of retrieving his faults was a difficult one; but the hatred of the multitude for the monarch whose corpse was being taken to Saint-Denis in a solitary hearse, its enthusiasm for a prince who was only noted for his dissolute life, prompted the latter to undertake the task.

One of the first acts of the new sovereign was an edict against the farmers of the revenue. On May 12 a Chamber of Justice was established, before which a whole class of men were made to disgorge the gold on which they had fed. This court was established in the Couvent des Grands-Augustins, and an adjoining room was turned into a chamber of torture. *Question* was applied to the enriched financiers just as if they had been vulgar criminals. The penalties inflicted by the court were amende honorable, pillory, imprisonment with hard labour, death, and confiscation in any case.

This long and minute series of trials had the usual result of quarrels between great people. The booty

changed hands, but the people had no share in it. Scarcely eighty millions were returned to the coffers of the State, and the remainder was appropriated by those whose duty it was to punish exactions. It was the eternal theft of thieves deceived by confrères which, it is said, has the privilege of exciting the devil's hilarity. President de Fouqueux appropriated the property of one Bonvalais, famous for his immense wealth. There were many victims. Paparel, brother-in-law of the Marquis de la Fare, who was one of the Regent's favourites, was condemned to death. Ferlet, François Aubert, d'Armilly, Pierre Maringue, de Berally, Gourgon, Crojet, Chaillon, Henault, and many others were similarly treated. The Regent, who, as the worthy grandson of Louis XIII., liked to play the part of dispenser of justice, was relentless, and would not interfere. These executions offered nothing remarkable, for I find but few allusions to the subject in Charles Sanson's notes; and as I do not pretend to make of this book an exhibition of human butchering, I must fain leave the subject, and pass on to a more important event of the time in which my ancestor was concerned in a singular manner.

The scandalous orgies of the Regent at the Palais Royal and the acerbity of pamphlets had at length compromised his popularity, and his enemies thought the time well chosen to deprive him of power. At the head of the Regent's opponents were Philip V., King of Spain, whose ambition was to add to his crown another realm, and thus become King of the half of Europe;

and also the legitimised princes designated for the Regency by Louis XIV., who by a decree of Parliament had recently been deprived of the prerogatives of princes of the blood at the instigation of the Duke of Orleans. These ambitions and hatreds clubbed together; the plotters devised gigantic plans; enlisted a few poor noblemen; and it was this circumscribed intrigue, the authors of which would have appeared more ridiculous than guilty but for their alliance with a foreign prince, which was called the conspiracy of Cellamare.

Cardinal Alberoni, minister of Philip V., Prince de Cellamare, the Spanish Ambassador in Paris, and the Duchess du Maine, who could not console herself for losing the opportunity of governing France, were the chief wirepullers of the plot. This plan was not wanting in boldness. Philip d'Orléans was to be captured and imprisoned in the citadel of Tarragonie, and the Duke du Maine was to be proclaimed Regent; the Pretender was to be landed in England; it was further proposed to return Naples and Sicily to the empire, to annex the Netherlands to France, to give the duchy of Tuscany to the second son of the King of Spain, Sardinia to the Duke of Savoy, Commachio to the Pope, Mantua to the Venetians; to recognise Philip V.'s claim to his grandfather's throne in case the boy-king Louis XV. should die; in short, to organise a Latin empire which was to exercise an irresistible preponderance in Europe.

This was no doubt a vast conception, and it is curious

that the man of genius who devised it was so mistaken in the instruments and the means he used to carry it out. Among the princes and noblemen who joined him, not one had the stuff of an average conspirator. The auxiliaries who recruited these powerless plotters were, for the most part, timid and discredited adventurers. The result of this conspiracy on paper is well known, and it is doubtful whether it would ever have been mentioned in history had it not led to a new war between two nations the occurrence of which family links seemed to render impossible.

The statesmen who, in the boudoir of the Duchess du Maine, plotted a change in the destinies of a great nation committed the absurd blunder of giving the documents they wished to send to Spain to an underwriter of the King's library, named Buvat. A note left among the papers entrusted to his hands awoke Buvat's suspicions, and on leaving the house of the Prince de Cellamare he hastened to communicate with the able Dubois, prime minister of the Regent. Dubois used him as a spy, and was informed, day after day, of all the secrets, with which he took care not to interfere until he knew them thoroughly; and then he put a sudden stop to the conspiracy by capturing all the conspirators. But the Regent, whose influence was restored through this cabal, could show clemency without peril. No execution followed this rose-coloured plot, and there would be no need for me to allude to it if Charles Sanson had not chanced to take a part in one of its least known incidents.

An Italian nobleman, who had obtained the confidence of the Regent by promising to tell him how to make gold, at length persuaded him that he possessed the power of evoking the devil; and the adept having chosen the pits of Vanves for his operations, the Regent promised to join him there with the Marquis de Mirepoix. This Italian was the agent of a Silesian adventurer named De Schlieben, who had been sent to France by the Princess des Ursins. Some time before a late colonel called La Jonquière had tried to capture the Regent in the Bois de Boulogne which the prince was to traverse. He missed Philip by a quarter of an hour. La Jonquière had fled, but he had been arrested at Liége and imprisoned in the Bastille. Schlieben undertook to accomplish what La Jonquière had failed to do, and stratagem very nearly succeeded where strength had been unsuccessful. The Regent's incredible curiosity was very nearly followed by fatal consequences, and his liberty was preserved in the following manner:

A woman who had recently arrived in Paris, and whose beauty was remarkable, was living in furnished apartments of the Rue du Pont-aux-Choux. She received many visits; at times her visitor was an abbé or an officer; at others a countryman or a bourgeois. Her neighbours, who took her for a woman of dissolute life, felt little astonishment at the number of her acquaintances; but one of them discovered that this profusion of adorers was but apparent, and that only one man, under different disguises, visited the unknown. He informed the lieutenant of police of his discovery; and

this official was about to order the woman's arrest when a terrible uproar was heard in her room. The door was forced open, and the lady was found struggling with a man dressed as a musketeer, whom the neighbours again identified under the thick moustache he had added to his disguise, and who spoke with a foreign accent. It appeared that jealousy was the cause of the scene, for the woman threatened the man who, judging by appearances, was her lover, with a dagger she held in her hand. The police were sent for; but the musketeer managed to escape; and the policemen having failed to question her on the spot, when she was excited and might have spoken the truth, she afterwards gave only vague and mendacious information. The lieutenant of police condemned her to imprisonment at the general hospital, after being publicly whipped. This punishment was usually inflicted by the executioner's assistants. On the day after it was inflicted, Charles Sanson remarked with astonishment that the assistant who had been employed on the occasion wore a signet ring of great value; he also noticed that the man blushed when he looked at him. Hereupon Sanson demanded how the jewel was in his possession; the assistant with some hesitation answered that the unfortunate woman had resisted, and that the ring and a small diamond had fallen from her hair; he took possession of the jewels; and as the woman after the infliction was being led to the hospital, she told him in a low voice that she had seen him, but that she did not intend to denounce him, and should even give him the small diamond if he would

take the ring to a merchant named Planta, at the Duke de Richelieu's mansion, and that he should be amply remunerated by him; she also begged him to ask the man to whom she sent him not to forget her.

The improbability of this quality of merchant attributed to the owner of a ring of which the crest was surmounted with an earl's coronet, struck Sanson. He severely scolded his assistant, and immediately took the ring to the lieutenant of police. The woman was confronted with the executioner's assistant, and, when she was threatened with torture, she volunteered a full confession. Her name was Antoinette Sicard. She was M. de Schlieben's mistress, and had come with him from Bayonne to Paris. She had vaguely heard of grand projects which were to be for her lover a source of great wealth; he had once brought with him to her room an Italian with whom he was on intimate terms. In the course of the dinner they laughed at the simplicity of a person whose name they did not pronounce, who had consented to go and see the devil, at night, in the pits of Vanves, when it was so easy for him to enjoy the sight in his own palace by looking at himself in a mirror.

These revelations were communicated to the Abbé Dubois. He had heard of the Regent's absurd intention, and had vainly besought his master to renounce his contemplated journey. The discovery which (thanks to the intervention of Charles Sanson) the lieutenant of police had just made, confirmed the suspicions he already entertained. He ordered the arrest of the 'devil' and

his companion, but they both took to flight. The Italian took refuge in Spain. De Schlieben, less fortunate, was taken just as he was about to cross the frontier. Those who captured him took him back to Paris in a stage-coach without saying a word of their mission to the other passengers. When the coach arrived in Paris, it drove into the Bastille.

Schlieben's ring remained in Charles Sanson's possession; it was the only reward he received for the service he had rendered the State.

CHAPTER VII.

COUNT DE HORN.

COUNT ANTOINE-JOSEPH DE HORN was the scion of a princely race; and he was connected with the highest nobility of Europe. At the time when speculation, under Law's auspices, was raging in Paris, and the temptation of gain was leading astray many persons of position and family, Count de Horn was living in the capital the life of a young lord of fashion and fortune. The sensation which was produced may easily be imagined when it was heard that he had been arrested and put under lock and key under the twofold charge of having murdered, in company with a Piedmontese, called the Chevalier de Milhe, and a third unknown person, a Jew who speculated in the shares of the Royal Bank, in order to rob him of a pocket-book which contained a sum of 100,000 livres.

The murder was perpetrated in a tavern of the Rue Quincampoix, where, it was alleged, Count de Horn and his accomplices had made an appointment with the Jew, under pretence of purchasing the shares he had in his pocket, but in reality to steal them from him.

The greatest agitation prevailed at Court in con-

sequence of this affair, owing to the illustrious rank of the accused, and of his connection with the loftiest aristocracy of the land. De Horn's trial was pursued with unprecedented rapidity, and it seems as if the numerous steps taken to save the young man's life only hurried his fate. When his parents heard of his incarceration, they lost no time in moving heaven and earth on his behalf. On the eve of the trial, a large number of his kinsmen assembled in the Palais de Justice, and waited for the members of the court, to bow to them as they passed, by way of commending the accused to their indulgence. This imposing manifestation, undertaken by the first seigneurs of France, produced no effect: the court of La Tournelle sentenced Count de Horn and the Chevalier de Milhe to be broken on the wheel, and left there until death should follow.

This sentence filled the young man's friends and parents with terror and surprise. They sent to the Regent a petition in which it was represented that Count de Horn's father was mad, that his kinsman Prince Ferdinand de Ligne was in a similar condition, that lunacy was a common ailing in his family, and that the young man must have committed the crime when of unsound mind. Among those who signed the petition were Prince Claude de Ligne, Marquis d'Harcourt, the Earl of Egmont, the Duke de la Trémouille, the Duke de la Force, the Archbishop of Cambray, Prince de Soubise, the Princess de Gonzague, and many others of the same rank. All the facts adduced in this petition were certainly authentic. The great race of the Princes de Horn and Ovérisque

had given many examples of mental aberration. All the subscribers of the petition went in a body to the Palais Royal; but the Regent only consented to receive a deputation. He was inflexible with regard to a reprieve; and it was with much difficulty that he consented to a commutation of the sentence into decapitation. He could only be moved by being reminded that he was himself related to the culprit through his mother the Princess Palatine. How he kept his promise will be seen hereafter.

This obstinacy on the part of the Regent was much commented upon. Personal animosity was said to be the cause. M. de Horn, being young, handsome, and captivating, had been something of a lady-killer. Now, morality was not the distinguishing feature of Philip d'Orléans' Court, and it was said that several beauties in fashion had regarded the foreign young lord with more than ordinary favour. Mdme. de Parabère's name was particularly mentioned; and it was related that the Regent had once surprised M. de Horn in conversation with the beautiful marchioness. In his fury the prince showed him the door, saying, 'Sortez'—to which the Count made the proud and appropriate answer: 'Monseigneur, nos ancêtres auraient dit, sortons.' To this adventure, whether real or invented, was attributed the Regent's hatred for Count de Horn, whose life he had sworn to sacrifice. It is not my business to discuss this question. What was most certain was that Law, the minister of finance, and Dubois, the prime minister, showed themselves the bitterest foes of Count de Horn. The influence of the

shares of the Royal Bank and of the Mississippi was diminishing; and they were in hopes that this might be mended by a display of unparalleled severity for the punishment of a murder committed with the object of taking possession of some of these shares.

Shortly afterwards, Charles Sanson received a visit from the Marquis de Créqy, the nobleman who had been the instigator and leader of all the attempts made to save the unfortunate youth. He seemed convinced that the Regent would keep his word, and showed him a letter in which the Duke de Saint-Simon expressed his conviction that Count de Horn would be decapitated. The Marquis added that his royal highness had also promised that the execution should take place in the court of the Conciergerie, to spare the culprit the shame of being led through the crowd. The only thing was to spare the unhappy young man as many sufferings as possible. M. de Créqy expressed a wish to see the sword which was to be used for his execution; he turned pale when my ancestor produced the broad double-edged blade, sharp and flashing, which could hardly be styled a weapon. On one side was engraved the word *Justitia*; on the other a wheel, emblem of torture. It was the sword with which the Chevalier de Rohan had been decapitated.

M. de Créqy could hardly refrain from weeping when he begged Charles Sanson to be as lenient as possible in the execution of his fearful mission, to uncover only the neck of the victim, and to wait until he received the priest's absolution before giving him the fatal blow.

The conversation then turned to the measures to be taken for the remittance of the body, which M. de Créqy claimed in the name of the family. He requested my ancestor to procure a padded coffin wherein to place the remains of De Horn, which were then to be taken away in a carriage sent expressly for the purpose. Charles Sanson promised to see to the accomplishment of these lugubrious details.

When he left, M. de Créqy, wishing to reward my ancestor for the services he asked, presented him with 100 louis, and insisted on his accepting the gift. But Charles Sanson firmly refused. M. de Créqy appeared moved, and retired. I may be forgiven for dwelling with some complacency on this trait of disinterestedness on the part of one of those who preceded me in the office I held for many years; it may be considered as an answer to the charge of cupidity which has been launched at a profession which did not appear sufficiently soiled by blood.

Only a few hours had elapsed since the visit of the Marquis de Créqy, when Charles Sanson received the order to take, on the next morning at six o'clock, from the Conciergerie, Count Antoine de Horn; to convey him to the Place de Grève, after passing through the torture-chamber, and carry out the sentence of Parliament in its cruel tenour. My ancestor's expectation was justified; the Regent did not keep his word; Law and Dubois had won the day against the Duke de Saint-Simon and the nobility.

To my ancestor's extreme surprise, the sentence did

not even contain the secret restriction of a *retentum*, which spared horrible sufferings to the accused, by ordering the executioner to strangle him before breaking his limbs. How could he now keep the promise he had made to the Marquis de Créqy? Charles Sanson passed the night in anything but pleasant reflections.

It was broad daylight when my ancestor arrived at the Conciergerie with his sinister cortége. He immediately entered the prison, and was conducted to a lower room in which were the Count de Horn and M. de Milhe, who had just been tortured. Both were horribly mangled, for they had supported the boot to the eighth spike. The Count was extremely pale. He cast a haggard look around him, and kept speaking to his companion, who seemed much more resigned and listened with religious attention to the priest who was consoling him. As to M. de Horn, instead of being plunged in the state of prostration which usually followed the abominable sufferings he had just borne, he gesticulated with feverish animation and pronounced incoherent words which almost seemed to justify what had been alleged in his defence concerning the unsoundness of his mind. He violently repulsed the priest, who was dividing his attention between the two sufferers, and repeatedly asked for Monsignor François de Lorraine, Bishop of Bayeux, from whom he had received the communion the day before.

The fatal moment came. The culprits were carried to the executioner's cart. Charles Sanson sat down next to the Count, while the priest continued speaking

to the Piedmontese. Seeing the unhappy young man's extreme agitation, my ancestor thought he might quiet him by giving him some hope, even were that hope to remain unrealised.

'My lord,' he said, 'there is perhaps some hope. Your relations are powerful.'

The prisoner violently interrupted him. 'They have abandoned me,' he exclaimed; 'the Bishop—where is the Bishop? He promised to return.'

'Who knows?' my ancestor ventured to say; 'reprieve may yet come.'

The young man's lips turned up contemptuously. 'If they wanted to spare my life, they would not have crippled me in this fashion,' he replied, bitterly, casting a look at his lacerated legs and feet.

Charles Sanson says in his notes that he really hoped and expected that some attempt would be made to save De Horn. But nothing occurred. The Pont-au-Change was passed, and in another minute the cortége reached the Place de Grève. The Count looked at Sanson reproachfully as if upbraiding him for what he had said; but he was now quite collected and the fear of death had left him.

At length the cart stopped at the foot of the scaffold. The culprits, owing to the torture they had undergone, could not move unaided. Charles Sanson therefore took Count de Horn in his arms and carried him up the steps. At the same time he whispered in his ear the advice that he should ask permission to make revelations, as a means of gaining time; but the unfortunate young man had again

lost his self-possession and gave vent to incoherent exclamations. 'I knew they would not allow the Bishop to come,' he said; . . . 'they have arrested him because he had shares also. But I shall sell my life dearly; only give me arms! . . . . they cannot refuse to give me arms!' . . .

While he was thus expressing himself, Charles Sanson stepped back, motioning to his assistants to begin their work which consisted in tying him to the plank on which he was to be broken. When this was done, the priest, who had just left the Piedmontese, approached De Horn: 'My son,' he said, 'renounce the sentiments of anger and revenge which trouble your last moments. Only think of God: He is the sovereign author of all justice, if you appear before Him with a contrite and humbled heart.'

The Count at length seemed moved, and he joined in the priest's prayer. As to my ancestor, he remembered M. de Créqy's request as to priestly absolution, and in this respect his conscience was firm; but he had also promised not to make the young man suffer. In an instant he decided on the course he should adopt. Simulating sudden illness, he passed his iron bar to Nicolas Gros, his oldest assistant, took the thin rope used for the secret executions of the *retentum*, passed it round the Count's neck, and before Gros had raised the heavy bar wherewith he was about to break the culprit's limbs, he pulled the rope, and thus spared him the most atrocious sufferings ever devised by human cruelty.

On the other hand, the Chevalier de Milhe, who was being broken, uttered wild shrieks. In vain did the

priest wipe the perspiration from his brow, and pour a few drops of water into his mouth. Charles Sanson was struck with the inequality of the sufferings of the two men, and told Gros to give him the *coup de grâce*—the blow which broke the chest.

Gros obeyed, but not without casting an uneasy look at the commissaire, who was viewing the execution from the balcony of the Hôtel-de-ville. No doubt the latter cared little for executions of this kind, of which, perhaps, he had seen but too many, for he perceived nothing. At this moment the priest, surprised not to hear the cries of Count de Horn, returned to exhort him to repentance: he saw that death had forestalled him. The rope was still hanging from the young man's neck, and my ancestor hastened to conceal it while the ecclesiastic was standing between the Hôtel-de-ville and himself; then, placing a finger on his lips, he solicited the priest's discretion.

Both passed the remainder of the day beside the mangled remains. Shortly after the execution, a carriage drawn by six horses, preceded by a mounted servant, and followed by six servants in gorgeous livery, entered the Place de Grève. It was the Duke de Croy d'Havré, whose arms could be descried on the panels of his carriage through the black crape which covered it. He was soon followed by three other carriages, which stopped on the north side of the square. They were all in deep mourning, as also the harness of the horses and the liveries of the servants. The blinds were closed, as much to avoid public curiosity as to conceal the cruel sight of the scaffold.

But it was whispered in the crowd that the last comers were the Prince de Ligne, the Duke de Rohan, and a Croüy, the last scion of the illustrious race of Arpad, which traced its origin to Attila, and put forth more legitimate rights to the crown of Hungary than the house of Hapsburg.

My ancestor was surprised not to see the Marquis de Créqy. But his astonishment was short-lived, for a rumour at the other end of the Place announced the arrival of two other carriages, in an apparel still more pompous. They drove up to the other carriages and took up a position in the same line. The Marquis de Créqy stepped out, and advanced on to the square clad in the uniform of a colonel-general and general inspector of the King's armies, and wearing the insignias of the Golden Fleece, the grand crosses of Saint-Louis and Saint-Jean of Jerusalem. His countenance bore the traces of profound grief. He traversed the Grève with a firm step; the crowd stepped back respectfully before this great personage, who was one of Louis XIV.'s godsons.

As soon as the commissaire saw M. de Créqy, he retired from the balcony of the Hôtel-de-ville, as if only waiting for this final protest to bring the scene to a conclusion. This meant that justice was satisfied. The Marquis walked straight up to my ancestor with a severe face, and looking at him almost threateningly:

'Well, sir,' said he, in a stern voice, 'what of your promise?'

'Monseigneur,' answered Charles Sanson, 'at eight

o'clock this morning M. le Comte de Horn was dead, and the bar of my assistant struck a dead body.'

The priest confirmed my ancestor's words.

'Well,' said M. de Créqy, in a milder tone, 'our house shall remember that if it could obtain nothing from the clemency of the Regent and from the justice of Parliament, it is at least indebted to the humanity of the executioner.'

The Count's body was then untied and taken to one of the carriages. It was so mutilated that the limbs seemed ready to separate from the trunk. As a protest against the cruelty of the sentence, M. de Créqy insisted on holding one of the legs, which only adhered to the corpse by the skin. When this was done the carriages moved away in a file, and stopped before the house of the Countess de Montmorency-Lagny, *nee* De Horn, where the Count's remains were placed in a bier and deposited in a chapel. It remained there for two days, surrounded by a numerous clergy who sang the mass of the dead. Meanwhile Prince François de Lorraine, Bishop of Bayeux, had returned to Paris. He expressed much grief at having been unable to attend his unfortunate kinsman to the scaffold, thinking that the execution was to take place at a later date. He nevertheless arrived in time to join his prayers to those of the clergy, and, in company with MM. de Créqy and de Plessis-Bellière, he escorted the body to the Castle of Baussigny, in the Netherlands, where the Prince de Horn, eldest brother of the defunct, and head of the family, usually resided.

This extraordinary affair greatly irritated the highest personages of the State against the Regent and his favourites: it proved of no assistance to Law, whose fall was unavoidable. On his return from his country-seat the Duke de Saint-Simon hastened to write to the Duke d'Havré to express his regret at what had occurred, and to say how he himself had been deceived by the false promises of the Duke d'Orléans.

I quote here the Duke d'Havré's answer, because it not only expressed the sentiments of all the French nobility, but it corroborates what I have said concerning Charles Sanson's conduct:

'My dear Duke,—I accept with gratitude, and I understand quite well, the regret you are kind enough to express. I do not know whether the Marquis de Parabère or the Marquis de Créqy obtained of the executioner of Paris the charity which is attributed to him; but what I do know is that the death of Count de Horn is the result of a false policy, of the financial operations of the Government, and, perhaps, also of the policy of the Duke d'Orléans. You know my sentiments of consideration for you. CROY D'HAVRÉ.'

Was Count de Horn really innocent? We have no right to judge the merits of those it was our mission to put to death. Nevertheless I have taken the liberty to allude to the rumours which were current at the time of De Horn's arrest, and which made him out to be the victim of the Regent's personal animosity. Another version

tended to establish his innocence, or, at least, so to diminish his responsibility in the Jew's murder, that, were the version correct, the sentence he suffered could only be regarded as a monstrous iniquity. It was said that M. de Horn and the Chevalier de Milhe had not made an appointment with the Jew with the intention of murdering and robbing him, but merely with the object of obtaining from him a large sum in shares of the Bank which the Count had really entrusted to him; that not only did the Jew deny the deposit, but that he went so far as to strike Antoine de Horn in the face. Upon this the young man, who was hot-blooded and passionate, seized a knife that lay on the table and wounded the Jew in the shoulder. It was De Milhe who finished him and took the pocket-book, of which the Count refused to have a share. If the affair occurred in this way, it must be acknowledged that the Regent, and the magistrates who served his hatred, had a heavy reckoning to answer for.

CHAPTER VIII.

CARTOUCHE.

ON October 15, 1721, Paris was in a fever of excitement. The whole population was crowding the streets; in shops, taverns, and even in drawing-rooms, people greeted each other with this phrase, which nevertheless met with much incredulity:

'Cartouche is captured.'

'Barbier's Journal' related the capture in the following terms:

'15th.—Great News in Paris!—I have spoken before of one Cartouche, a notorious robber who was sought for everywhere and was found nowhere. It was thought to be a fable. His existence is only too real. This morning at eleven o'clock he was taken; but never was a thief more honoured.

'Words attributed to him inspired fear in the Regent, so that secret orders were given for his apprehension; and the report was spread in Paris that he had left the capital, that he had died at Orleans, and even that he was a myth, so that he should not imagine that he was being looked for.

'He has been discovered through a robbery he com-

mitted at an innkeeper's with three of his companions, and also at the instigation of a patrol soldier who sold him. Pekom, major of the guards, who knew that he was acquainted with Cartouche, took him to the Châtelet to be dealt with by justice, unless he gave information concerning Cartouche. The soldier consented and acted as a spy. M. le Blanc, Secretary of State for War, who conducted the whole affair, took with him forty picked soldiers and a number of policemen, who had orders to take Cartouche dead or alive; that is, to fire upon him if he tried to run away.

'Cartouche had gone to bed on that day at six o'clock, at a wine dealer's of La Courtille, and he was lying in bed, with six pistols on the table. The house was surrounded, and fortunately he was captured while still in bed; otherwise he might have killed some one.

'He was bound with ropes, and taken to M. le Blanc's, who did not see him, because he was ill; but M. le Blanc's brothers and the Marquis de Tresnel, his son-in-law, saw him in the court, among numerous officers and clerks who were there. He was then taken afoot to the Châtelet, so that the people might see him, and know of the capture.

'It is said that Cartouche was insolent, and gnashed his teeth, and that he said they should not hold him long. The people believe him to be something of a sorcerer; but as for me, I think that cannot prevent him from being broken on the wheel.

'He has been thus taken to the Châtelet, escorted by a large concourse of people. He has been put in a

cell, attached to a pillar, for fear he should attempt to break his head against the walls, and the door is guarded by four men. Never were such precautions taken before. He is to be questioned to-morrow. . . .

'It is said that he answers readily, and that he maintains that he is not Cartouche; that his name is Jean Bourguignon, and that he comes from Bar-le-Duc.'

One may judge from the above document how Cartouche was feared by the population which, during ten years, he had robbed with a good fortune only equalled by his audacity.

I do not share an opinion expressed in another quarter, that the deeds of all the ruffians who at the time swarmed in the capital were combined in this legendary figure, nor that the people, ever greedy of extraordinary occurrences, used to attribute to Cartouche the crimes of the great criminals of the period, such as Balagny-le-Capucin, Dantragues, Louis Marcant, Rozy-le-Craqueur, Charles Blanchard, Pierrot-le-Bossu, and, above all, Pélissier *alias* Boileau, a famous criminal who was hanged in 1722, and who had almost as many titles as Cartouche to the sad notoriety which belonged to the latter.

I will prove this by giving a nomenclature of the executions which form the subject of the following chapter. Never were robberies, burglaries, and attacks on the high road so numerous as from 1715 to 1725. It seemed as if one half of Paris were robbing the other half.

This fever of rapine and crime was only natural. The Regency was a period of social transformation.

The public mind, compressed by the severe autocracy of Louis XIV., was awaking, and, in its reaction against the asceticism of the last years of the reign of the *Roi Soleil*, it had no higher aspiration than a craving for the satisfaction of its material appetites. A kind of frenzy possessed the nation. Honour, the former object of her veneration, was replaced by pleasure; and licence, the result of a relaxation of manners, had rapidly spread through the lower classes of society. The system which could in the course of a day enrich the poor, and ruin the rich, initiated noblemen, bourgeois, and men of the people into the emotions of gambling. The shrine of Hazard was substituted for that of patient work and resigned probity. This fever of riches, this thirst for pleasures and ups and downs in fortune, filled Paris with a flock of disappointed adventurers, ruined gamblers, and unsatisfied libertines, ready to seek in crime the pleasures which a regular life could not afford them. The luxury of servants had increased enormously, and in their ranks the army of disorder found numerous and willing recruits. It also found elements in the army, and even among an ill-organised and undisciplined police.

It was thus that individual and organised banditism was enabled to engage in an open struggle with society, oppose strength to the strength used to destroy it, and persevere with impunity, during many years, in its depredations and outrages.

Cartouche has remained the ideal of the thieves of the eighteenth century. In the sphere of crime he is the exact image of the period of transition during which

he lived. In this miscreant's person there is much of the brigand of the middle ages and, at the same time, of the thief of our times. Like the former, he has frequent recourse to brutal strength, but he prefers stratagem, of which he is a master. He has the intuition of all the improvements introduced by his successors in the art of appropriating other people's property; and it may be said that he is the precursor of thieves of our generation.

Cartouche's biography, which has been frequently written, does not come within my province. He only belongs to me from the time when the law handed him over to that one of my ancestors who then wielded the sword of justice. I will therefore say but a few words concerning Cartouche's birth and life, and relate a few anecdotes which I find in my notes.

Cartouche, who was the son of a cooper, passed his youth in that quarter of Paris called the Marais. After being a bohemian, a recruiter, and a soldier, he returned to Paris in 1715. His biographers say that peace cast him penniless on the King's pavement. It appears to me more probable that he deserted the ranks. What is quite accurate is the tradition which attributes to this singular man the powers of organisation of a general, and shows us this Cæsar of the highway at the head of a legion in which he had established a kind of military hierarchy and a unity of command and action; he had accomplished spies in all ranks of society, and his army had even its surgeons.

Thus organised against an almost powerless police,

Cartouche's gang put society in such peril that protracted impunity might have given it the proportions of a public calamity. Thieves were so numerous, night attacks were so frequent, that no one ventured out of doors after dark without an escort, and caravans were organised to cross the bridges or to go along the quays; the waylayers acted with such *ensemble* and upon plans so well combined that all their attacks were crowned with success. Otherwise it would be hard to explain the prodigious number of their misdeeds.

Cartouche's strength and audacity, his ingenious fecundity of stratagems, his extraordinary agility, the energy with which he endured privations and fatigues, and above all his really superior intellect, naturally designated him as the leader of gangs of thieves. Certain adventures in which members of the aristocracy played a part, gave him notoriety; a daring escape and many singular exploits established his celebrity, and made him almost popular.

The robbery committed on the Archbishop of Bourges was the subject of public conversation and caused considerable amusement at Court. Monseigneur was travelling when, in the neighbourhood of Saint Denis, he was waylaid and robbed by Cartouche's men. They took from him his pastoral cross, his pontifical ring, ten louis he had in his purse, and two bottles of Tokay. It was said that the thieves had taken the Abbé Cerutti, who accompanied the archbishop, and was young and handsome, for a disguised

lady, and that, as Monseigneur de Bourges was much offended by the suggestion, Cartouche had beaten his subordinate, saying, 'This will teach you to respect the clergy!' Mdme. la Marquise de Beauffremont was also the heroine of an adventure with Cartouche. It was alleged that she distributed safe-conducts and was on good terms with Cartouche, for the following cause: One night, after returning from a ball, she sent away her maids, and began to write by her fireside. She suddenly heard a noise in her chimney, and soon after a man, armed to the teeth, tumbled in the room amidst a cloud of soot, dust, and sparrows' nests. As, in his fall, the visitor had sent the burning logs about the floor, he took the tongs, and mindless of the effect produced by his singular way of entering, he methodically replaced all the wood in the grate, and then turning to Mdme. de Beauffremont:

'May I venture to ask, madam,' said he, 'whom I have the honour of addressing?'

'Sir,' stammered the Marchioness, trembling with fear, 'I am Mdme. de Beauffremont; but as I do not know you at all, and as you have not the looks of a thief, I cannot guess why you gain access to my room in the dead of the night and down the chimney.'

'Madam,' answered the unknown visitor, 'in coming here I was not precisely aware of the nature of the house into which I was compelled to intrude. And to shorten a visit which, I have no doubt, is not of your liking, allow me to ask you to have the kindness to accompany me as far as the gate of your mansion.'

As he spoke, he drew a pistol from his belt, and took up a candle.

'But, sir'——

'Madam, have the goodness to be quick,' he added, cocking his pistol. 'We must descend together, and you will be good enough to request the porter to open the gate.'

'Do not speak so loud, sir; the Marquis de Beauffremont might hear you!' said the frightened lady.

'Put on your cloak, madam. It is freezing, and you might catch cold.'

Things took place as the audacious visitor desired. Mdme. de Beauffremont was so frightened that she sank in a chair in the porter's lodge after the man passed the threshold of the mansion. She then heard a tap at the porter's window, and the voice of the strange visitor was heard saying:

'Monsieur le Suisse, I have walked three or four miles on the roofs of houses during the night to escape from the policemen who were after me. Do not go and inform your master that there was any impropriety in being in this house; otherwise you shall be dealt with by Cartouche.'

Mdme. de Beauffremont returned to her room and awoke her husband, who told her she must have been dreaming. Two or three days after this adventure she received a letter of apology and thanks, written in very respectful and choice terms, which enclosed a safe-conduct for Mdme. de Beauffremont and an authorisation to deliver similar documents to members of her

family. With the letter came a small box containing a fine diamond which was estimated at 6,000 livres, which sum Mdme. de Beauffremont hastened to present to the Hôtel-Dieu.

An anecdote which may appear more authentic is the trick Cartouche played at the expense of the chief officer of patrols, whom he deprived of his silver forks and spoons in broad daylight. One day, at twelve o'clock, as this officer was sitting down at table, the door was thrown open, and he saw a magnificent carriage flanked with two tall servants standing near his window. A stiff and self-possessed old man stepped out, and, announcing himself as an Englishman of distinction, he asked to see the chief officer. He was introduced to the dining-room. Perceiving that dinner was on the table, he apologised profusely, declined to take a seat, and having, he remarked in an accent which could leave no doubt as to his nationality, only a few words to say, he took the officer to a corner of the apartment, placing himself so that the latter should turn his back to the windows.

After relating how an anonymous letter had warned him that his house was to be attacked on the following night, after asking for sentries and promising a hundred guineas to the policemen if they captured the famous Cartouche, for whom the generous old Englishman expressed the most profound hatred, he left his host, who, much pleased at the prospect of a connection with so rich a man, insisted on escorting him to his carriage, and looked at the fine set-out as it disappeared round the street corner.

He was disturbed in his contemplation by the cries of his servant, who had just discovered that not a single spoon or fork remained on the table.

Cartouche, for it was no other, had acted his part so well, that the officer defended his visitor against the accusations of his servants, and maintained that he had not even approached the table. But soldiers in the court had seen the noble stranger's people carelessly leaning against the open window; the table being at a short distance from the window, it was probable that while the counterfeit Englishman was engaging the chief officer's attention, the tall footmen, stretching out their arms, had taken the silver plate.

A few minutes after, these suspicions were confirmed. A commissionaire brought to the chief officer a dozen forks and spoons of the finest tin, in place of those he had lost.

The salient feature of all Cartouche's acts was the witty frolic which was inseparable from them. The thief was not content with despoiling his victims; he laughed at them in the most disagreeable manner. This was, perhaps, the secret of his renown; Cartouche understood that much would be forgiven if he amused those who feared him.

It was on October 27 that Charles Sanson saw Cartouche for the first time. He was still at the Châtelet, and there was a large crowd before the entrance of the prison. Everybody wished to say, 'I have seen him!' and permission to visit the bandit was solicited as a great favour. Women were especially eager to have a peep at

him; the Regent's mistress, Madame de Parabère, was one of the first who scanned his features.

Charles Sanson was perhaps the only man who had a right to be more patient; but the lightness of sentiments which characterised the times possessed even the executioner; he could not resist the solicitations of a few friends who asked to accompany him, and he failed to understand that it was neither fair nor charitable to appear prematurely before a man who was doomed to meet him on the scaffold. In his notes, Charles Sanson says that Cartouche looked forty—a statement which does not agree with the date of his birth, but which can be explained by the effect produced on his appearance by the passions, debaucheries, and fatigues of his profession. His head between the ears was extraordinarily developed; his hair was thin and shaggy, and the eye was not wanting in malice. He was of rather low stature, but thinness made him look taller than he really was. 'We examined him with surprise,' adds my ancestor, 'so astonished were we that a man so ugly should have been represented as a woman-killer. He looked joyful and in good health, and when one of our number asked him whether he really was Cartouche, he shrugged his shoulders, and sung a chorus in the language of thieves.'

Cartouche recognised his grim visitor; he was rather troubled, but he soon recovered from his agitation, and, showing more gaiety than he had hitherto displayed, he pointed to the executioner's stick, and asked him if he had brought it to take his measure.

An attempt at escape, which was nearly successful, induced the authorities to transfer Cartouche to the Conciergerie. He was in a cell with another prisoner, who happened to be a mason. They made a hole in a sewer gallery. They fell into the water, waded their way to the end of the gallery, and, having removed a very large stone, they emerged in the cellar of a greengrocer. They went up to the shop, but, unfortunately for the fugitives, the greengrocer's dog began to bark furiously. The servant heard the noise, opened the window, and shrieked for help; the greengrocer came down with a light, and would have allowed them to run away, but four policemen, who were in the neighbourhood, ran up, entered the shop, and recognised Cartouche, who had chains to his feet and hands. They took him back to prison with his companion, and henceforth he was watched with the utmost vigilance.

Cartouche's trial was soon concluded. On November 26 was passed a sentence by which Louis Dominique Cartouche, *alias* Lamarre, *alias* Petit, *alias* Bourguignon; Jacques Maire, Jean Pierre Balagny, Pierre François Guthrus, Duchâtelet, and Charles Blanchard, were condemned to be broken, after suffering the *question ordinaire et extraordinaire.* Two minor accomplices of Cartouche, Magdelaine and Messier, were sentenced to be hanged.

On the next day, November 27, Cartouche was tortured. He suffered the 'boot' with extraordinary firmness, and refused to make any confession. Meanwhile the 'carpenter' had been ordered to erect five wheels

and two gibbets on the Place de Grève. It was known at large that Cartouche was to be executed on that day: the streets were crowded, and windows on the Grève had been let at a high price. Whether it was because the magistrates did not care to satisfy public curiosity, or because the other culprits were not in a state to appear on the scaffold, I do not know; but at two o'clock in the afternoon, four of the wheels and one of the gibbets were taken down, one gibbet being left to hang the effigy of a man named Camus, sentenced *in contumaciam*. Towards four o'clock Charles Sanson went to the Conciergerie, accompanied by his assistants; and the clerk of the court, after reading the sentence to the culprit, handed him over to the executioner.

Cartouche was very pale; but neither the sufferings he had endured nor approaching death made any impression on his hardened soul. Public curiosity had borne fruit; Cartouche thought he was a hero. He was about to ascend the steps of the scaffold, as the gladiators of Rome appeared before the Cæsar, and he wished to die amidst the applause of the people.

After he was placed in the cart, Charles Sanson uttered the traditional exclamation by which the last act of justice was announced, and the cortége set out. On the way, Cartouche, who was stretched at the bottom of the cart with his head resting against the seat occupied by the executioner, manifested great impatience. He repeatedly attempted to turn round, and at length he asked my ancestor whether the other carts were preceding theirs. His agitation became extreme.

When the cart reached the Place de Grève, he made an effort, rose and looked at the scaffold. When he saw that only one wheel was erected, he turned pale, large drops fell from his brow, and he repeated several times '*Les frollants, les frollants!*' (the traitors). He obviously expected to be executed in good company, and his courage was vanishing. As a means of prolonging his life, he said he wished to confess his crimes, and he was taken to the Hôtel-de-Ville. Meanwhile the scaffold remained standing, and the crowd that had congregated to see the execution did not disperse. On the following morning Cartouche was again handed over to Charles Sanson: but he was an altered man; he no longer made a show of his cynicism, and although his firmness was not impaired, it had lost all appearance of bravado. His instincts, however, appeared again; when he was placed on the 'Croix de St. André,' and the dull thud of the iron bar descending on his limbs was heard, Cartouche exclaimed in a stentorian voice, as if counting the blows, 'One!'

But he relapsed into silence. Many as were the crimes of Cartouche, he had the benefit of *retentum*, a clause which stipulated that the culprit should be strangled after a certain number of blows; but the clerk of the court was so confused that he forgot to mention the fact to the executioner. Cartouche was so strong that it required eleven blows to break him, and I can affirm that, contrary to what was stated in the *procès verbal* of the execution, he lived more than twenty minutes after being placed on the wheel.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ACCOMPLICES OF CARTOUCHE.

IF Cartouche had been able to guess the future, he might have seen that the fate of his accomplices was no better than his. On the fourth day after the execution of the celebrated bandit, Balagny and a few others took their place on the ignominious and barbarous wheel which was the certain end of anti-social lives. They gave information as to their accomplices, and made, at the foot of the scaffold, confessions which torture had failed to elicit from them.

They implicated so many persons, that another series of trials began, which lasted as long as the declarations of convicted prisoners compromised other persons, and threw new light on the immense ramifications of an association of miscreants which had for many years defied the police. More than sixty persons were under lock and key at the time of the execution of Cartouche and Balagny. This number increased every day in consequence of the confession of those who hoped to save their lives by denouncing their accomplices, and in June of the following year it rose to one hundred and fifty. The execution of Louis Marcant took place in March, that of Rozy in June; and all this blood, instead of

washing the affair away, seemed rather to make it more serious. Each day brought to light some new discovery; and this shows how profoundly mistaken were those who denied that Cartouche, the centre and wire-puller of this horrible association, possessed the organising spirit without which he could not have extended this immense net over the Parisian society.

Rozy revealed more than any of those who suffered before him. On the night which followed his last interrogatory before execution eighty persons were arrested and taken to the Conciergerie. M. Arnauld de Boueix, the instructing judge, questioned them during no less than thirty-two consecutive hours. This magistrate showed extreme zeal and firmness. Some even accused him of excessive rigour and even cruelty. This was easy to account for. M. Arnauld de Boueix was the son of a criminal lieutenant of Angouleme, who had come to Paris to watch a lawsuit, and who, on his return home, had been murdered on the high-road. Hence M. Arnauld de Boueix's hatred for his father's murderers.

The most curious feature of Rozy's denunciations was that they seriously implicated two police officers named Leroux and Bourlon. Rozy maintained their complicity with the association, and also especially charged them with taking part in the murder of a poor poet named Vergier, who had been killed a year before in the Rue du Bout-du-Monde.

The enemies of the Regent—and they were many—sought to trace to him the responsibility of this murder; they said that Vergier was killed by mistake, that the

murderers, paid by the prince, thought they struck down Lagrange-Chancel, author of the 'Philippics,' a collection of satires which had caused him the greatest irritation. This calumny was not credited, and it no doubt induced the Regent to show indulgence to the author of the verses, who, instead of rotting in a cell of the Bastille, as happened to Latude at Mdme. de Pompadour's instigation, was sent to the St. Marguerite isles, whence the poet escaped to Holland.

The arrest of Leroux and Bourlon caused some sensation. This, however, was not the first time that the police were found in connivance with thieves; but these two men were so warmly supported that their case attracted universal attention. M. d'Argenson, lieutenant of police, interposed on behalf of his employés; M. de la Vrillière, Secretary of State, in whose service Bourlon had once been, joined him in his efforts to extricate the two police officers. On the evening which followed their arrest, M. de Maurepas came with a lettre-de-cachet, to remove them from the Conciergerie to the Bastille. The gaoler, who thought he was under the order of the Parliament, refused to give them up. M. de Maurepas returned with another lettre-de-cachet which empowered him to take the gaoler with him if he persisted in his disobedience. The first president was then referred to; the latter referred to M. Amelot, president of La Tournelle; and these magistrates decided on handing over Bourlon and Leroux to M. de Maurepas, who took them to the Bastille. But on the next day the Parliament, ever jealous of its privileges, expressed much irritation and blamed the weak-

ness and timidity of its officials. After the sitting, they sent the procureur-général to the Palais Royal: the Regent declined to see them. At twelve o'clock President Amelot and two councillors came again. This time they were received. They humbly prayed his royal highness to appoint commissioners in order to finish the prosecution of Cartouche's gang, for, as far as they were concerned, they would immediately set free all the criminals who were still in prison. The prince was afraid of a great scandal, so he yielded, and Bourlon and Leroux were taken back to the Conciergerie. They probably escaped scot-free, for I do not find their names on Charles Sanson's dead-lists.

Still the scaffold and the gibbet were in constant use in the course of the year 1722, and it seemed as if the ramifications of the Cartouche association were endless. After the men came the turn of the women. As one may think, Cartouche was no puritan. He always had behind him a perfect seraglio, the members of which not only directed him but acted as powerful and useful auxiliaries. They had their part in his crimes, and it was deemed necessary that they should also have a share of the retribution.

Five of the principal mistresses of the notorious bandit were hanged in July 1722. One of them made a full confession, and, when tortured, implicated sixty persons. Most of the receivers of stolen goods were captured. Among them were large jewellers, well known in Paris, who hitherto had been taken for honest and influential tradesmen. The honour of the invention of *Moutonnage*,

which consists in obtaining the confessions of prisoners and thereby getting information from them, has been attributed to the modern police, particularly to Vidocq and his successors. The invention is not a commendable one; but I do not think that it belongs to our time. Police officers of a low order have always had recourse to such stratagems. Vidocq was especially clever in this way, because he was a peculiar individual; his antecedents and connections rendered him more apt than anybody else to gain the intimacy of malefactors. But Vidocq's system died with him; and if the celebrated police agent is still regarded as a giant in his own sphere, it must be acknowledged that his successors are dwarfs. Of course it is well known that these informers are necessary to the police; and they have been found in all times.

I hasten to add that the revelations which were made in the course of the executions of Cartouche's accomplices are quite different from modern confessions. Nowadays the prisoner is allured with a better treatment in prison, the hope of pecuniary remuneration and free pardon. Cartouche's accomplices were condemned, and never spoke during the investigation of this stupendous affair, which lasted two years. Many stoically suffered torture and did not confess; but their demeanour altered at the foot of the scaffold, their courage failed, and all the culprits asked to stop at the Hotel-de-Ville merely to prolong their lives. Cartouche, as we have seen, acted in the same way. However, he had chiefly strived to exonerate his brothers, maintaining that they

had taken no part in his crimes, because he would not allow them to join him in his expeditions. His generosity had no effect; his young brother, who was scarcely fifteen years of age, and whom he particularly loved, was sentenced to hard labour for life, and also to be suspended under the armpits for two hours on the Place de Grève. This new species of punishment was invented by M. Arnauld de Boueix. Hardly was the child suspended than he began to utter frightful shrieks, saying that he would rather die at once than suffer so much. Charles Sanson and his assistants were astonished and embarrassed, not knowing the effects of a kind of punishment to which they were not used; but as young Cartouche was said to be precociously wicked, they thought there was exaggeration in his complaints. Seeing, however, that his face was reddening, and that he could speak no longer, they freed him before the expiration of the two hours. He was taken to the Hotel-de-Ville, where he died without returning to consciousness.

This accident was much talked of; and M. Arnauld de Boueix was loudly taxed with cruelty. Tanton, uncle of the victim, was hanged on the same day.

In March 1723 trials were still going on. One of Cartouche's notorious accomplices was broken on the wheel. Like his predecessors, he halted at the Hotel-de-Ville and incriminated one hundred persons.

I have now done with this association, of which the existence has often been contested; but I must complete this chapter by rapidly enumerating a few other executions which took place at the time. The first was that

of Pélissier, a bold robber, who, disguised as a surgeon and a gendarme, had perpetrated crimes worthy of Cartouche himself. Having sufficiently 'worked,' he retired from 'business,' and went to Lyons, where he was living comfortably when he was arrested and transferred to Paris. His trial was soon concluded, although he denied that he had any accomplices. He had placed his fortune, which was considerable, in the Bank of Venice, and he was on the point of leaving France when he was arrested. His execution was one of the last by the hand of Charles Sanson. Although young, his health was rapidly declining, and a constitutional malady was fast leading him to an early grave. He was almost dying when, on May 24, 1726, he was, as it were, compelled to rise from his bed to watch the preparation of a punishment not frequently resorted to—burning. It was inflicted on Étienne Benjamin des Chauffours, a gentleman from Lorraine, for an infamous crime.

Charles Sanson did not survive this execution by many days. He died on September 12, 1726, at the age of forty-five. His widow gave him a superb funeral in the Church of St. Laurent. He left three children; the eldest was a girl, Anne-Renée Sanson, who married a man named Zelle, of Soissons; and two sons, Charles Jean-Baptiste Sanson and Nicolas Charles Gabriel Sanson; born, the first in April 1719, the second in 1721. The age of these two heirs of the sword of the law was an excellent opportunity for declining the bequest. Their mother judged otherwise, and took active steps to obtain

for Charles Jean-Baptiste the official investiture of the sinister office left vacant by his father, although he was only seven years old. This woman's severe face, of which I have a likeness, shows that she must have possessed a singular temper. She certainly had strange notions of the duties of maternity, for she did her utmost to obtain the post of executioner for the child. She was recommended by the criminal lieutenant and the procureur-général, and Charles Jean-Baptiste Sanson was appointed. During his minority, two questionnaires discharged the functions in his name; these were Georges Hérisson, who eventually became executioner of Melun, and a certain Prudhomme.

Although the child invariably accompanied his *locum tenens*, and was present at all executions to legalise them by his presence, he was too young to note his impressions as his father and grandfather had done. There is, therefore, a gap in these memoirs, which prevents me from alluding to several well-known executions.

CHAPTER X.

DAMIENS THE REGICIDE.

ONE evening, at the Palace of Versailles, Louis XV. was leaving the apartments of Mesdames, accompanied by the Dauphin and a part of the Court. He went down the flight of steps which led to the entrance of the palace, before which his carriage was waiting. It was bitterly cold; everybody was shivering, and the King, who was of a chilly disposition, wore two overcoats, one of which was lined with fur. As he was preparing to step into the carriage, a man rushed between the guards, forced back the Dauphin and the Duke d'Ayen, and struck the King, who exclaimed:

'Some one has given me a fearful blow!'

In the confusion caused by the double movement of the crowd that pressed forward to have a glimpse of the King, and the guards who kept them off, no one seemed to be aware of what had taken place. However, a footman who had seen the stranger place his hand on the King's shoulder, rushed upon him, and captured him, with the assistance of two other footmen.

The King passed his hand under his vest and perceived that he was wounded. At the same time he

turned round, and, seeing the man who had struck him, he exclaimed: 'He is the man; arrest him, but do him no harm!' After this, he returned to his apartments, supported by MM. de Brienne and de Richelieu.

The guards and the Switzers surrounded the murderer and led him to their guard-room. He was a tall man, from forty to forty-five years of age, with an aquiline and protuberant nose, deep-set eyes, and shaggy hair. He was so red in the face that even with the emotion he must have felt he did not appear pale. He was searched, and the weapon with which he had just struck the King was found in one of his pockets. It was a two-bladed knife, and he had used the larger blade. Thirty-seven louis of gold were also found, together with a book entitled, 'Christian Instructions and Prayers.'

When he was questioned, he said that his name was François Damiens, and that he had attempted to take the King's life for God and the people. A guard having asked him whether the money he had was the pay he received to perpetrate his crime, he refused to answer; but, apparently moved, he begged that the Dauphin should take care of himself and abstain from driving out of the Palace.

These words, which the man only uttered to increase his own importance, convinced the guards that Damiens was one of the agents of a vast plot which threatened the days of all the members of the Royal Family. In their excessive zeal they organised an extra-judicial interrogatory, and, forgetting that they were gentlemen

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and officers, they disgraced themselves by torturing the murderer.

Meanwhile the King had been undressed and his wound was examined. The utmost uneasiness was felt in consequence of the great loss of blood, but the doctors soon ascertained that Louis was in no danger. Damiens' knife had encountered three garments, and no vital organ was injured. But the King, who at first had shown so much coolness, became very agitated when he heard one of his courtiers observe in a low voice that the blade might be poisoned. He sent twice to the murderer to know whether he had dipped his knife in some drug; and the monarch's apprehensions became so great that he asked for his confessor, insisted five or six times on receiving absolution, summoned the Dauphin, entrusted him with the presidency of the Council, and generally behaved like a man who is convinced that death is drawing near.

The King's terror filled the palace with consternation; it incited Damiens' improvised tormentors to display additional cruelty in the tortures they inflicted upon him. His answers hardly differed from those he subsequently gave. In an incoherent and vague manner he protested that he never intended to kill the King, but only to give him a 'good warning,' which would induce him not to persecute provincial parliaments, and to dismiss the Archbishop of Paris, who was the cause of the evil. Damiens was obviously a lunatic, or nearly so.

At this stage of the murderer's interrogatory, M. de Machault, keeper of the seals, arrived. His perplexity

was great. His own disgrace must follow the King's death; the Dauphin's severe principles leaving but little likelihood of his accepting a minister who had been Madame de Pompadour's creature. Forgetting all dignity and sense of humanity, the keeper of the seals joined the officers in the discharge of their disgusting work, and surpassed them in cruelty. He thrust tongs into the fire, and, when they were red-hot, he began singeing with his own hands the unfortunate Damiens' legs, taking care never to pinch the same part of the leg twice, so that more acute suffering might be inflicted. The violence of this torture extorted no confession from the murderer, who merely observed that the King had recommended that no harm should be done to him. An odour of burnt flesh filled the room when the Duke d'Ayen came in; and when he saw what was going on, he bitterly upbraided M. de Machault and his companions for dishonouring their swords in such a manner. But M. de Machault was not deterred from his purpose; he had Damiens' legs exposed to a fire until they were but one sore; and as he still was silent, he threatened to throw him into the flames. Fortunately the lieutenant of police arrived, claimed Damiens as his prisoner, and took him away to the Conciergerie, where he was incarcerated in the cell once tenanted by Ravaillac, Henry IV.'s murderer.

Damiens' attempt was already known in Paris, and the old affection shown for the King was rekindling. The Archbishop of Paris ordered that prayers for his recovery should be said during forty-eight hours, and the

churches became too small for the congregations. Couriers from Versailles were anxiously waited for and questioned; and all the provincial parliaments sent addresses of loyalty to Louis. This effervescence, however, was of short duration; the King's wound was soon healed, and a few days after the momentous occurrence France hardly remembered that for a few hours the King had again been 'the beloved.'

As to Damiens, he was so hurt that he could not move. But he showed no signs of weakness. When questioned, he continued his incoherent statements, and showed that he was more of a religious fanatic than anything else. Suspecting his impending fate, he gave it to be understood that his accomplices belonged to the highest rank; but a subsequent investigation showed the untruth of his assertions. While preparations were being made for his trial he was watched as if the fate of France depended on his escape. Damiens was continually strapped down on a leather mattress, his right hand only being left free. Twelve sergeants picked from the French guards watched him day and night, and a cook of the Court was exclusively entrusted with his food, of which he never allowed him to partake before tasting it, for fear Damiens should be poisoned. One cannot but wonder at these extraordinary precautions against a man whose proper place was in a madhouse.

He recovered sufficiently to appear on March 17 before the Chambre de la Tournelle. He persisted in his previous statements, except in so far as they concerned his accomplices. He pretended that he only

wished to give a wholesome warning to the King, and denied that his crime was instigated by others. This did not satisfy his judges; every stratagem was resorted to to get at Damiens' secret; and, contrary to habit, a confessor was sent to him in the course of the trial, in the hope that a priest might obtain what judges could not elicit. But all such steps were of no avail.

On March 26 the Parliament was in full array; and the presence of the princes of the blood and of the chief members of the aristocracy showed that the last day of the trial was at hand. The procureur-général had drawn conclusions which were lying sealed before the president, M. Pasquier. After a few more questions Damiens was again adjured to name his accomplices. The conclusions of the procureur were then opened and read; they proposed that Damiens should suffer the punishment awarded to regicides, and be tortured before execution. At seven o'clock the Court came to the following decision, which I must quote for my readers to believe in its atrocious barbarity:

'The Court declares Robert François Damiens duly convicted of the crime of *lèse-majesté*, divine and human, for the very wicked, very abominable, and very detestable parricide perpetrated on the King's person; and therefore condemns the said Damiens to *amende honorable* before the principal church of Paris, whither he shall be taken in a cart, wearing only a shirt and holding a taper of the weight of two pounds; and then, on his knees, he shall say and declare that, wickedly and with premeditation, he has perpetrated the said

very wicked, very abominable, and very detestable parricide, and wounded the King with a knife in the right side, for which he repents and begs pardon of God, the King, and Justice; and further the Court orders that he then be taken to the Grève and, on a scaffold erected for the purpose, that his chest, arms, thighs, and calves be burnt with pincers; his right hand, holding the knife with which he committed the said parricide, burnt in sulphur; that boiling oil, melted lead, and rosin, and wax mixed with sulphur, be poured in his wounds; and after that his body be pulled and dismembered by four horses, and the members and body consumed in fire, and the ashes scattered to the winds. The Court orders that his property be confiscated to the King's profit; that before the said execution, Damiens be subjected to *question ordinaire et extraordinaire*, to make him confess the names of his accomplices. Orders that the house in which he was born be demolished, and that no other building be erected on the spot.

'Decreed by Parliament on March 26, 1757.

'RICHARD.'

This sentence, which so minutely describes the details of the punishment, cannot but inspire irresistible horror. Formal deliberations took place at the house of the procureur-général regarding the choice of preliminary tortures; the contagion of cruelty extended to the public, and private individuals made suggestions on the subject. One proposed that matches should be inserted under Damiens' nails, and then

lighted; another that his teeth should be pulled out; another that he should be partly flayed and a burning liquid poured over his muscles. The surgeons of the Court examined these proposals, and decided that torture by the 'boot' was preferable to other means.

If I give these sickening details, it is because Damiens' execution was almost unique in its atrocious cruelty. Singularly enough, this, the most horrible of inflictions ever recorded, occurred but a few years before the abolition of torture.

CHAPTER XI.

EXECUTION OF DAMIENS.

The authors of the apocryphal memoirs published by Sautelet[1] found no better means of endowing their compilation with the appearance of authenticity than to allege that these memoirs were written by my grandfather. They represent him as being present during Damiens' execution, of which the details were said to be furnished by him, and Charles Jean-Baptiste Sanson, who was then executioner. Charles Henri relates how his father became almost mad with grief, when he heard that he had to dismember; how he went to Melun to purchase the four horses required for the occasion; the whole being spiced with details not a whit more accurate. The chapter in question is completed by the narrative of a visit which the keeper of the seals, escorted by four seigneurs, one of whom was the Duke de Richelieu, paid to the executioner with the object of replacing the horses he had bought for the dismemberment by weaker animals, so as to prolong the sufferings of the culprit.

[1] Fictitious memoirs of Charles Henri Sanson, executioner during the Revolution, were published in 1832. Balzac was one of the authors of this work, which was one of pure invention.

Not only did nothing of the kind take place, M. de Machault usually transmitting his orders to my ancestor through the procureur-général, or requesting him to call at his residence, but Charles Jean-Baptiste Sanson could take no part in the execution of Damiens, as, in the month of January 1754, he became paralysed, and also because this execution was not within his province, but that of Nicolas Gabriel Sanson, his younger brother, executioner of the Prévoté de l'Hôtel.

This office was little more than a sinecure; crimes tried by the Prévoté had not been met with capital punishment for fifty years. When Gabriel Sanson received an order to prepare, not only for the execution of Damiens, but also for his torture, he was filled with apprehension. He spoke to M. Leclerc de Brillet, lieutenant of the Prévoté, who gave him a letter for the procureur-général, in which he urged the latter, in the interest of all parties, to entrust the forthcoming execution to other hands. But, as I said, Charles Jean-Baptiste Sanson was paralysed. His son, Charles Henri Sanson, who was to take his place, was only seventeen years of age. He had discharged his father's functions for the last two years; but the official title of executioner did not belong to him, and it was hardly advisable to entrust so young a man with an execution which was only known by tradition. The procureur was therefore unable to grant the request, but he ordered that Charles Henri, the provisional executioner, and his assistants should be at Gabriel Sanson's disposition.

It was Charles Henri who bought the four horses;

he paid for them 432 livres, a large sum for the time. These horses were placed in a stable of the Rue des Vieilles Garnisons, behind the Hôtel-de-Ville. At the request of M. Leclerc de Brillet, the archives were searched, and papers on the manner of carrying out the execution were found and handed to the executioner of Prévoté de l'Hôtel, whose terror was in no wise diminished by the communication. Indeed, his feelings became so strong that he fell ill. The procureur summoned him to his presence, and upbraided him for what he styled his childishness. The magistrate's threats did not affect him much, for he was speaking of giving up his office, which was his only source of income, when an old questionnaire whose father had taken part in the execution of Ravaillac, and had given some information regarding the punishment of regicides, offered to undertake the burning with pincers.

The scaffold was erected in the night of the 27th. On Monday, the 28th, at six o'clock in the morning, Gabriel Sanson, his nephew Charles Henri, and their assistants went to the Grève to see if all their directions had been attended to. The scaffold was erected in the centre of a space of a hundred square feet, which was surrounded by thick wooden palings. This enclosed space had only two entrances; one for the culprit, the executioners, and the guards, the other communicating with the Hotel-de-Ville.

They then repaired to the Conciergerie, where they found the questionnaire, who was waiting for them. Soon afterwards they were joined by M. Lebreton, the

clerk of the court, accompanied by MM. Carmontel and Peuvret, the ushers. They then prepared to go to Damiens' cell, but on the staircase the clerk bethought himself that it was too small to contain the whole party, and it was decided that the prisoner should be sent for, and sentence read to him in a hall on the ground floor.

Damiens was brought forth: he was carried in a leather bag which was closed over his shoulders, and only allowed his head to appear. He was extracted from this kind of strait-jacket, and told to kneel. Damiens listened to his sentence with extreme attention; and he examined those who were present with much curiosity, trying no doubt to recognise the executioner. His face was as yellow as wax. He could scarcely bear the glare of daylight; but nevertheless his eyes flashed with unwonted energy. When the clerk had done, Damiens asked the archers who had carried him in to help him to rise, for his wounds were not yet healed, and he murmured several times, 'Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!'

Gabriel Sanson now approached and placed his hands on his shoulder. Damiens started and looked scared; but at this moment the Curé de St. Paul approached, and the countenance of the regicide became again calm and smiling. The priest motioned to the others to draw back, and remained alone with Damiens. He spoke to him in a low voice, and Damiens prayed with much fervour. The priest's exhortation seemed to impress him deeply. When their prayers were finished, Damiens was offered food, but he refused to take anything but a

glass of wine, which, however, he was unable to drink. He was affected by a kind of paroxysm which, during the first part of my professional career, I had many occasions to remark in the most courageous and stoical convicts, a violent contraction of the muscles of the neck which prevents the culprit from swallowing.

Damiens was then removed to the torture-chamber where Presidents Maupeou and Molé, and Councillors Severt, Pasquier, Rollin, and Lambelin were already assembled. He was again interrogated. But no question could elicit any information concerning accomplices; and at length the judges rose and told Damiens that he must be tortured, since he would not speak out. The executioners came forward, and the questionnaire of Parliament enclosed the prisoner's leg in the 'boot,' pulling the cords more tightly than he usually did. The pain must have been insufferable, for Damiens shrieked; his face became livid, he threw back his head and nearly fainted away. The surgeons approached, felt his pulse, and declared that the fit was not serious. Damiens opened his eyes and asked for drink; a glass of water was offered to him, but he begged for wine, saying in a broken voice that his energy was failing him. Charles Henri Sanson helped him to carry the glass to his lips. When he had drunk he heaved a deep sigh, closed his eyes, and murmured a prayer. The executioners once again surrounded him: two judges had left their seats and were walking in the hall. President Molé was very pale, and a pen which he held was trembling. Torture was begun again, and for two

hours and a quarter the unfortunate Damiens endured the most excruciating sufferings. At the eighth brodequin the surgeons said the sufferer could stand no more, and the judges rose to depart with an alacrity which proved that perhaps they could not see any more either. The boot was taken off. Damiens tried ineffectually to raise his legs, and then, bending forward, he looked at his broken limbs with an air of grief. Meanwhile the procès-verbal was finished, and Damiens had to sign it. The regicide was then taken to the chapel of the Conciergerie, where he remained with the Curé de St. Paul and another priest.

Profound consternation was depicted on every face, and yet Damiens had only endured a small part of the sufferings which were in store for him. Charles Henri Sanson and two assistants remained with the prisoner, to take him to the Place de Grève, while Gabriel Sanson repaired to the scaffold to see if all was ready. The torturer who had undertaken the burning with pincers, and who curiously enough bore the name of one of the great seigneurs of the time, Soubise, had promised to procure all the necessaries indicated in the sentence. On nearing the scaffold Gabriel Sanson immediately perceived that Soubise was drunk and incapable of discharging his duties. Seized with apprehension, he asked to see the lead, sulphur, wax, and rosin which the old drunkard had undertaken to purchase; the man had procured nothing, and at the moment when the prisoner was expected to arrive, Gabriel discovered that the wood of the pile was damp, and could scarcely be set alight.

Gabriel Sanson lost his presence of mind ; and for a time the scaffold was a scene of indescribable confusion ; the assistants ran to and fro, all spoke at the same time, and the unfortunate executioner of the Prévoté de l'Hôtel tore his hair, deploring the terrible responsibility he had assumed.

The criminal lieutenant came up, and put an end to the scene. He severely reprimanded Gabriel Sanson, and told him he would send him to prison for a fortnight for neglecting his duties ; he then ordered him to return to the chapel and send Charles Henri Sanson to the Grève in his stead. The assistants were sent to the neighbouring grocers to purchase what was missing ; but the crowd followed them, they were recognised in all the shops they applied to, and the tradesmen refused to sell the articles they asked for, or said they had not got them. If coercion had not been resorted to, nothing could have been procured.

The difficulties were so great that preparations were not completed when the culprit arrived, and he had to sit on the steps of the scaffold while the last arrangements for his death were being made before him. He had recovered his firmness, and looked calmly about him. He asked to be taken to the Hotel-de-Ville ; he begged the magistrates to protect his wife and daughter who were ignorant of his intention to murder the King, and swore that he had no accomplices. He was then taken back to the scaffold.

The chafing-dish on which the sulphur was being burnt with the hot coals filled the atmosphere with

acrid vapour. Damiens coughed, and, while the assistants were making him fast to the platform, he looked at his right hand with the same expression of sadness which had appeared on his face when looking at his legs after torture. His arm was tied to an iron bar so that the wrist should over-reach the last board of the platform. Gabriel Sanson brought the chafing-dish. When the blue flame touched Damiens' skin he uttered a frightful shriek, and tried to break his bonds. But when the first pang had shot through him he raised his head and looked at his burning hand without manifesting his feelings otherwise than by grinding his teeth. This first part of the execution lasted three minutes.

Charles Henri Sanson saw the chafing-dish trembling in his uncle's hands. By his pallor, which was almost as deathly as the sufferer's, and the shudder which made his limbs shake, he perceived that he could not proceed with the burning with red-hot pincers; and he offered a hundred livres to one of the valets if he would undertake the horrible task. The man, whose name was André Legris, accepted. The remainder of the execution was proceeded with; every clause of the atrocious sentence was literally carried out, and, when the four horses had dismembered the body, the remains of Damiens were thrown on the pile.

It was discovered that the victim's hair, which was brown when he was brought to the Grève, had turned as white as snow.[1]

[1] The translator has thought fit to suppress some of the really too horrible details of this execution; and if he has preserved its main features,

The execution of Damiens produced so fearful an impression on Gabriel Sanson, that he was induced to throw up the office of executioner of the Prévoté de l'Hôtel. He gave it to his nephew in return for a yearly stipend of two thousand four hundred livres. Charles Sanson henceforth discharged two functions which had hitherto been separate.

it is because he thought he had no right to divest this historical occurrence of that which might fully impress the reader with its atrocious cruelty, without entering into too sickening details.—N. ED.

CHAPTER XII.

LALLY-TOLLENDAL.

ON May 6, 1766, the Parliament assembled in Court of Justice condemned Thomas Arthur de Lally-Tollendal, lieutenant-general, and commander of the French forces in East India, to capital punishment, *for betraying the interests of the King.*

Iniquitous as this sentence was, it should be said that it was partially supported by public opinion, which, however, was so warm at a later period in asking for Count de Lally-Tollendal's rehabilitation. Our mishaps in India and the loss of our colonies had exasperated the national pride which the French are sufficiently disposed to exaggerate. Thomas Arthur de Lally-Tollendal was of Irish extraction. His family had followed the exiled Stuarts. He became a soldier when he was only a child. At twelve years of age he held a commission in Dillon's Irish regiment, and he took part in the siege of Barcelona. He promptly obtained the command of a regiment, which took his name in 1740; and at the age of thirty-seven he was appointed lieutenant-general.

He devised a plan for landing 10,000 men on the

English coast, to support the rights of the Pretender. This idea, which was as bold as it was impracticable, could not be carried out, although Count de Lally devoted a large part of his fortune to its execution. His dislike for the English and his extreme bravery induced the Government to entrust to him the chief command of the colonial troops; but the violence of his temper, his obstinacy, and especially his contempt for all means of action except brutal strength, were destined to lead him into mistakes in a position demanding more knowledge of politics than science of war. Sixteen years before Lally-Tollendal's appointment, Dupleix, with scanty forces, at enmity with the Company, receiving neither help nor subsidies from the mother country, had held in check English power in the Indian peninsula by mere diplomatic proficiency. Lally knew how to conquer; but he was incapable of studying and detecting the secrets of Dupleix's policy. He began by taking St. David by storm; he also captured Goudelour, and swept the Coromandel coast. At St. David he permitted frightful excesses. His ill-paid troops rushed into the town and ransacked it. At the same time Lally, in his contempt for the Hindoo religion, violated the most revered sanctuaries, and caused natives suspected of being spies to be blown from cannon. The Hindoos who had remained with the French now left them. Deprived of their co-operation, and against the advice of his generals, he marched forward. The English retreated before him; but when he was in the heart of the country they attacked him, and Lally,

at length aware of his mistake, but too late to repair it, retraced his steps, harassed in a retreat which cost him a quarter of his army. Such a defeat, however, would not discourage a man like Lally. He attacked and captured Arcate, and besieged Madras, which soon fell into his hands. His soldiers repeated, or rather transcended, the horrors of the pillage of St. David. But 4,000 Englishmen had taken refuge in the white tower called Fort St. George, where they defeated all attacks. At the same time the Dekhan army, the command of which Lally had taken from Bussi, one of Dupleix's lieutenants, to entrust it to the Marquis de Conflans, was beaten and captured at Masulapatam.

To relate the sequel of Lally's career in India would be an infringement of history. The end of his resistance is well known; from disaster to disaster, Lally came to be surrounded and besieged in Pondicherry, which, however, he defended with extraordinary bravery. At length he was compelled to assemble a council of war to discuss the conditions of his capitulation. General Coote refused to accept anything except an unconditional surrender; and Lally-Tollendal, together with the greater part of his soldiers, were sent to England as prisoners.

The news of this disaster excited general indignation in France. Lally-Tollendal's numerous enemies threw the brunt of the misfortunes of the French arms on his shoulders. Not only were his military talents and his courage impeached, but it was said that he had wasted the public resources, and kept the money sent to him

to pay his soldiers. Lally was in London and had nothing to fear; but on hearing of the rumours that were current, he forgot the dangers that might threaten his life. He solicited of the English Government leave to return to France on parole, and arrived in Paris not as a culprit, but rather as a prosecutor, threatening his enemies with prompt revenge.

However great public anger might be at the time against the man to whom was attributed the disgrace of the French armies, the Government did not care to have Lally arrested. Perhaps the Ministry had no wish to sacrifice the innocent accomplice of the faults for the greater portion of which the Government of Louis XV. was responsible.

Count Lally's enemies, however, were powerful, and an order of arrest was at length issued. The Count's relations and friends urged him to return to England before it was too late; but the fiery general would not hear of a retreat, and implored the King to send him to the Bastille, where he was imprisoned on November 15, 1764.

His captivity was not a severe one, and he doubtless had little idea of the fate which was in store for him; he was allowed to walk about the prison, and to receive his friends while preparations for his trial were being made. The trial lasted more than nineteen months. Far from appeasing the hatred of his enemies, his misfortunes inflamed the ardour with which they called for judgment upon him. On August 3 a petition was sent to the King by M. Legris and the members of the Superior Council

of Pondicherry, who, offended to the highest degree in their honour and reputation by the imputations of M. de Lally, asked for a judicial sanction of his or their conduct. Moreover, the Superior of the Jesuits of Pondicherry, Father Lavaur, returned to Paris at this time; and he was soliciting a pension for the services he had rendered in India to the French Government when he died. His papers were seized and searched; and, besides a large sum in gold which was found at his residence, a long memoir was discovered in which Count Lally was charged with malversation and treason. Noisy as were the clamours of his enemies, so little reason could be given for a charge of dishonesty that the Jesuit's document was the only basis taken by M. Pasquier, who conducted the procedure of this grave affair.

As for the Count, he was so convinced of his own innocence that he was imprudent enough to impeach the officers who had served under his orders, together with the administrators of the colony. He charged them with such violence that his death and condemnation became indispensable for their justification. Letters-patent of the King deferred Lally's trial to the Grande Chambre des Tournelles. When the accused appeared before his judges, he was no more able to control his temper than when he was in India. He disputed the ground step by step, protesting against the charge, answering, fuming, retorting, stigmatising the cowardice of some, the cupidity of others, and hinting that the only guilty party was the powerless Government, which had neither assisted him in his triumph

nor in his misfortunes. The vehemence of his speech, the eloquent expression of his leonine head, which, even in silence, he raised with pride and defiance, and the manner in which he conducted his own defence, produced a favourable impression on the public, and diminished the hostility of the masses. It became evident that treason only existed in the imagination of Lally's enemies; or why had he voluntarily returned to France and thrown himself between the lion's jaws? The charge of malversation was equally groundless; but to prove Lally's abuse of power, violence against the administrators of the colony and his soldiers, and cruelty to the natives, there were but too many witnesses; and for a prejudiced tribunal this was a sufficient pretext to inflict capital sentence.

This sentence was pronounced on May 6, 1766. Thomas Arthur, Count de Lally-Tollendal, was condemned to be decapitated, as duly convicted of having betrayed the interests of the King, of the State, and of the Company, and of having abused his authority.

Lally's pride inspired him with so high a sense of his own importance that, like Marshal de Biron, he had never admitted the possibility of such a result. Many indications of his impending fate should have apprised him of the danger. One morning the major of the Bastille was taking him to Parliament, and a crowd surrounded the carriage. Lally having tried to look out of the window, this officer told him that he had orders to kill him at the slightest word he should address to

the people. Again, a few days before judgment, and as he always appeared dressed as a general and wearing all his orders, the President directed the major to deprive him of these. The officer intimated his orders to the Count, and begged him not to oblige him to have recourse to violence. Lally answered that he would rather part with his life than with the rewards of his bravery and devotion to the King. A struggle followed; Lally was seized by the soldiers, who had to tear his uniform before they could deprive him of his epaulettes and decorations. After sentence was read out to him, he remained dumbfounded and stupefied. But his silence was short. He burst out with curses, and called his judges executioners and assassins. He recovered his self-possession when taken back to the Bastille; expressed his regret to the officer for what had occurred, and embraced him. He went to bed and slept profoundly for a few hours. At seven o'clock in the evening he was roused and told that M. Pasquier, who had reported on his trial, wished to see him. He rose and told the gaoler to introduce the visitor.

Many petitions had been addressed to the King. M. de Choiseul himself interceded in favour of Lally; but Louis XV. was inflexible. However, it was with soft words and hints of the possibility of a reprieve that M. Pasquier spoke to the prisoner; but he used the word 'crime' in qualifying the acts which the Count deemed worthy of reward, and Lally heard no more. He was seized with a fit of fury greater than any he ever had experienced

before, and, seizing a compass which he used to draw the map of the former scene of his success and reverses, he stabbed himself near the heart. The weapon encountered a rib, and only inflicted a slight wound; the gaolers rushed upon him and wrenched the compass from his hand. But despair gave extraordinary strength to the unfortunate old man; he shook off their grip and made for M. Pasquier. Soldiers had to be called in to prevent mishap.

M. Pasquier was so annoyed by this scene that he forgot what was due to an illustrious victim; he ordered Tollendal to be gagged, and asked that, in consequence of the general's attempt to commit suicide, the hour of execution should be advanced.

On the preceding night Charles Henri Sanson had been told to be ready on the following day, at two o'clock in the afternoon. *Thus the execution of Lally-Tollendal was fixed before sentence was passed.*

Charles Sanson was at home, waiting for definite orders, when a carriage drove up before the door; and from it alighted his father, who some years before had retired to the little town of Brie-Comte Robert. Jean-Baptiste Sanson was deeply agitated; he had heard of the result of Lally's trial, and the Count's name had stirred in his mind some curious recollections.

Five-and-thirty years before, a few young men, who had spent the evening in one of the houses of the suburbs of Paris which was afterwards to be called the Faubourg Poissonnière, lost their way, and splashed through the mud, completely at a loss as to the direction they should

take. At length they perceived at the end of a street a row of brilliantly lighted windows on the façade of a large house. They heard a faint murmur of instruments which issued from the premises, and having peeped through the garden gate they saw the figures of dancers whirling past the windows. The young men were somehat elated with wine, and they resolved to join in the fun if they could. They boldly knocked at the door, and gave their names to the servant, requesting the honour of admittance to the ball. The master immediately appeared. He was a man of about thirty, with a gay face and a somewhat distinguished appearance; and the elegance of his dress pointed to a higher social station than the young men had supposed when they plied his knocker. He greeted them with courtesy, and heard their request with the smile of a man who understood the frolic of youth. He told them that the ball was given on the occasion of his marriage, added that it would doubtless be for him a great honour to receive his visitors in his ball-room, but that the society they wished to join was not, perhaps, worthy of them.

The young men, however, insisted; and the bridegroom, having conducted them to the ball-room, introduced them to his young wife and to his family.

At the expense of this family the young noblemen no doubt intended to laugh; but, with the exception of the bridegroom, all the good people retained, in the midst of their pleasures, a dark and severe aspect which damped the gaiety they had anticipated. They looked

with surprise at these curious guests, whose faces remained rather grim and sinister even when they had to express the good-will they felt for the strangers. Some of the women, however, were pretty; the noblemen were in high spirits, and too young and light-hearted to give attention to the circumstance. They danced all night, and seemed delighted at the whole proceedings.

At daybreak, and as they were about to retire, the master of the house asked them whether they wished to know the name and quality of the host of whose hospitality they had kindly consented to partake. The young men rather sarcastically acquiesced, expressing their thanks for the pleasant time they had spent. The young bridegroom, still smiling, then told them that his name was Jean-Baptiste Sanson, that he was the executioner, and that most of the gentlemen whose pleasures they had shared exercised the same profession.

This piece of information very visibly disturbed two of the young men; but the third one, who wore the uniform of Dillon's Irish regiment, and who was remarkable for the manly beauty of his features, burst out laughing, and said that he had long wished to make the acquaintance of the functionary who decapitated, broke, and burned so many good people, and he was very glad of the opportunity. He then begged Sanson to have the kindness to show them his instruments.

Jean-Baptiste hastened to comply with the wish, and took the party to a room which was the arsenal of his tools of torture and death. While the officer's companions were expressing astonishment at

the curious shape of certain instruments he examined the swords of justice with much attention. Jean-Baptiste Sanson took one down and handed it to the young man. This sword was the same which Charles Sanson had shown to the Marquis de Créqy, at the time of Count de Horn's trial. The officer looked at it carefully, and taking it with both hands he wielded it with uncommon strength and dexterity, asking his host whether it was possible to strike off a head with it at a single blow. Jean-Baptiste answered in the affirmative, and added jocosely that if ever the fate of MM. de Boutteville, de Cinq Mars, or de Rohan gave him the opportunity, he could pledge his word that he would not make him suffer.

The young officer, whose curiosity might almost be termed a presentiment, was Count de Lally-Tollendal.

Jean-Baptiste Sanson never forgot the adventure; and, being struck by the strange concourse of circumstances which now seemed to urge him to the discharge of his promise, he resolved to honour his engagement.

Charles Henri Sanson could hardly refrain from smiling when he heard his father speak. The muscles of his right side, which had been paralysed, were now strong again; but he was, on the whole, weak and old. His hair was as white as snow, and although he was only sixty he appeared much older than he really was. It was not without trouble that Charles Henri induced him to give up his intention; and he only did so on the understanding that his son in person should wield the

sword, and that he himself should superintend the execution.

While they were conversing, a police officer came to announce to Charles Henri that the hour appointed for the execution had been advanced, and that he was impatiently expected at the Bastille. Jean-Baptiste chose among the swords that which, five-and-thirty years before, M. de Lally had held; and father and son repaired in great haste to the State prison. The vestibule which led to the prisoner's cell was filled with soldiers and policemen. When Lally heard of the change of hour, he exclaimed that he cared not, and that, although he had been gagged in prison, they could not prevent him from addressing the people while being led to execution. Thick as were the walls of the Bastille, the sighs and cries of the prisoners sometimes traversed them and excited popular sympathy. The unworthy manner in which Lally was treated had become known, and, on the whole, public opinion was favourable to him. Anger had made place for pity; the fate of the unfortunate and illustrious old man was out of proportion to his mistakes. The authorities feared that his violent and impassioned address might induce the people to rescue him, and it was ordered that he should remain gagged while being led to death. The officers of justice did not wait for the executioner to pinion Lally, who resisted with extreme energy; and an iron gag was thrust into his mouth.

These new violences had just taken place when the two Sansons arrived. Jean-Baptiste was much moved.

The cell bore the traces of the struggles which had just taken place there. The table was upset, the papers flying about the cell, the chairs broken. Lally himself was stretched on the bed, bruised and his clothes torn to tatters. Blood was flowing from two deep gashes on his face. A groan, which was more like a threatening cry than an expression of pain, issued from his throat, in spite of the gag, and from time to time he shook his long white hair as a lion shakes his mane. All the persons present were still under the impression of the fray; some were trembling and affected, others were irritated. When the magistrate who had ordered Lally to be gagged saw Charles Henri Sanson, he turned to him, exclaiming, in a loud and rough voice:

'And now this is your business!'

The prisoner heard him, and he scanned the executioner. He also, most probably, remembered the night he had spent in the Rue d'Enfer.

Charles Henri was about to order his assistants to take up the prisoner and carry him down when his father stepped forward, saying that he alone had a right to command. He knelt down before Lally, and, perceiving that the cords were so tight that they almost entered the flesh, he ordered the assistants to slacken them. Lally's eyes then turned to the old executioner. He recognised him, for a smile came to his face, and a tear to his eye. When, after traversing the immense crowd which filled the streets, the executioner's cart reached the Place de Grève, the prisoner had to stop for a moment to hear his sentence read to him. When the

clerk of the Court came to the words, '*for betraying the interests of the King*,' Lally pushed him away, and would hear no more. One could see in his face how much he suffered at being prevented from protesting against the charges brought against him. Supported by Jean-Baptiste, he ascended the scaffold with a firm and light step. When he reached the platform he cast a proud look at the crowd below—a look, my grandfather told us, which was more eloquent than anything he could have said. He then turned to the old executioner. Jean-Baptiste Sanson showed him his withered arm, and pointing to his son who was standing at the other end of the scaffold so as to conceal the sight of the sword from the unfortunate Lally, he said that he was too old to strike, and that his promise must be discharged by a stronger arm and steadier hand than his.

Lally thanked him by an inclination of the head. Charles Henri Sanson now approached, and he was about to raise his sword when old Jean-Baptiste stopped him. With a firm hand, he took the gag out of the Count's mouth, and bowing respectfully: 'Monsieur le Comte,' he said, 'I am the master here. As it happened thirty-five years ago, you are my guest. Accept the supreme hospitality which I then promised you. You can speak if you like.'

'I have spoken enough to men,' answered Lally; 'I have now to speak with God.' And he begun in a loud voice a prayer which I faithfully transcribe, such as my grandfather wrote it out from memory after the execution:

'Oh Lord, You see that I am innocent of the crimes ascribed to me; but I sinned against You when I attempted to destroy myself, and for this I am justly punished. I receive from the hands of this man, placed in my way by Your unfathomable Providence, the death that I wished to inflict upon myself. I bless You, in Your justice, for You will avenge my memory and punish the real traitors.'

After pronouncing these words in a very distinct voice, Lally asked Charles Henri Sanson to come forward.

'Young man,' he said, 'free me of these bonds.'

'Monsieur le Comte, your hands must remain bound behind your back.'

'Is it, then, necessary to tie my hands in order to cut off my head? I have seen death often enough as near as now, and do they think I am going to resist?'

'Monsieur le Comte, it is the custom.'

'Then help me to take off this vest and give it to your father.'

Charles Henri obeyed, and took off the vest, which was made of a valuable golden tissue of India. Each button was a large ruby of the finest water. After this, the Count laid his head on the block, and said, with nervous animation:

'And now, you can strike!'

Charles Henri raised his weapon, and let it fall on the old man's neck. But the hair, which had not been cut, but only raised, obstructed the blade, and the head did not fall.

The blow was so violent that Lally was struck down to the earth. But he sprang to his feet in a moment, and he glared at Jean-Baptiste Sanson with a lamentable expression of indignation and reproach.

At this sight, the old executioner rushed towards his son, and, suddenly recovering his former strength, he took the bloody sword from his hands, and before the cry of horror which rose from the crowd subsided, Lally's head was rolling on the scaffold.

The old nobleman's last prayer was partly granted. The trial of the Count de Lally-Tollendal was revised and his memory was solemnly rehabilitated.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHEVALIER DE LA BARRE.

AFTER rusting for seven-and-thirty years, the political scaffold had just been erected again for Lally-Tollendal; and the sword of justice had scarcely been restored to the scabbard, when it had again to be drawn against another nobleman, as interesting for youth and courage as for the disproportion between the offence and the punishment.

Towards the end of June 1766, Charles Henri Sanson received an order to start immediately for Abbeville to carry out a capital sentence. The despatch, and the pressing terms in which it was couched, surprised him very much.

A few days before, the Parliament had rejected the appeal of the young Chevalier de la Barre, sentenced by the Presidial of Abbeville to be burnt after being decapitated, for singing obscene songs concerning the Virgin and the Saints. The culprit was not twenty; the most distinguished barristers of Paris declared that the proceedings which had preceded the sentence were monstrous; and it was openly said that the Parliament had confirmed the judgment in order to give satisfaction to

the clergy, whom the edict of proscription against the Jesuits had alarmed. No one thought that the sentence could be executed, and it was generally believed that the King would use his privilege of reprieve.

Nevertheless, the injunctions received by my grandfather were so formal, that he lost no time in setting out for Abbeville. As soon as he arrived in that town, the cradle of his family, he put himself at the disposal of the criminal lieutenant. Fearing that his profession might excite the repugnance of some of the persons who lived in the house of this magistrate, Charles Henri Sanson gave his name to the servant, saying that he would wait in the courtyard for an answer. He was not a little surprised when he saw the magistrate appear in person, and, instead of the polite but cold greeting he was accustomed to receive, welcoming him with demonstrations of great satisfaction. He was a tall and lanky man; a low forehead, a hooked nose, and greenish eyes concealed under bushy eyebrows gave him a not very prepossessing appearance in spite of the jubilation depicted on his countenance.

My grandfather bowed low; but, before he could explain the purpose of his visit, the criminal lieutenant told him that he knew he came about the Chevalier de la Barre; that the King had turned a deaf ear to all petitions for the young man's life; that the execution was to take place on the following day; and with the most objectionable familiarity he furnished Charles Henri with all the details of the trial and of the crime, laying stress on the justice of the former and the enormity of the

latter, sneering at the extreme indulgence of the Parliament, which had mitigated some clauses of the sentence, and repeating several times: 'It is a great culprit, a very great culprit, you have to punish, sir; and you should be proud and happy to have to avenge the King of kings, so grievously outraged by this ruffian.'

Accustomed as he was to the dignity of Parisian magistrates, Charles Henri Sanson could hardly credit his senses. After the criminal lieutenant of Abbeville had given him his instructions, he went to the house which had been assigned to him as an abode, thinking on the way that he was again about to serve as the instrument of an iniquity.

The facts which had brought about the conviction of the Chevalier de la Barre were these: In 1747 a kind of calvary in the Italian style had been erected on the new bridge of Abbeville; it was adorned with an image of Jesus Christ. On the morning of August 7, 1765, it was remarked that the cross had been mutilated during the night. One of the arms of the image was broken, the crown of thorns torn off, and the face of the statue was besmeared with mud.

This took place at a time of religious effervescence; the trial of Lavalette, the edict of eviction against the Jesuits, the attacks of philosophers, and parliamentary agitation had led astray the most sincere Catholics who thought their religious independence was threatened. The sacrilegious offence which had been committed in their town produced deep commotion among the inhabit-

ants of Abbeville. An expiatory ceremony conducted by the Bishop of Amiens increased this effervescence. The prelate went to the calvary at the head of a procession, walked around it with a rope round his neck and barefooted, excommunicated the culprits, and called down upon them death and execration.

The criminal lieutenant immediately began proceedings. Over one hundred witnesses were heard: none could furnish any reliable information; but they were lavish in the vague insinuations that are familiar to inhabitants of small towns. The airy sallies of a few young men assumed the proportions of premeditated crimes against religion, and led to the inference that the mutilation of the holy statue was the symptom of a conspiracy of the infidels of Abbeville against the Catholic religion.

M. Duval de Soicourt, the criminal lieutenant whom we have seen greeting my grandfather in so strange a manner, showed extreme passion in the course of this affair; and this led, not without some show of reason, the people to believe that under the cloak of religion he was avenging his personal animosities. There resided in Abbeville a pious and charitable lady who was disliked by M. Duval de Soicourt. Mdme. Feydenu de Brou—such was her name—was abbess of Villancour, and had in her convent a girl whose guardian was the criminal lieutenant. The orphan was rich, and her guardian had always nourished a hope that her fortune might come into his family by the marriage of the girl with his son. But when she was of age she expressed

the greatest repugnance to the proposed union; the abbess supported her in her resistance, and she obtained a decision of the Presidial, by which M. Duval de Soicourt was deprived of his guardianship. Stung to the quick, and supposing that Mdme. de Villancour wished to bespeak the rich alliance for the Chevalier de la Barre, a cousin of hers who lived with her, the criminal lieutenant swore that he would have his revenge.

A few days after the sacrilege he found an opportunity of giving vent to his hatred. The Chevalier de la Barre and one of his friends named D'Etalonde de Morival, when sauntering about town, met a procession of monks, and did not take off their hats as it passed—an irreverence which was considerably extenuated by the fact that it was raining. This was enough for M. Duval de Soicourt; he connected the two affairs—the adventure of the procession and of the sacrilege, and also the blasphemous statements of which he had heard. He therefore accused five young men belonging to the most important families of the province. Three of these, D'Etalonde de Morival, Dumaniel de Savense, and Douville de Maillefer, escaped; the two others, De la Barre and Moisnel, were arrested.

The trial was soon concluded. Moisnel, who was only fourteen, was acquitted; but, in spite of Mdme. de Villancour's efforts, the Chevalier de la Barre and D'Etalonde de Morival, the latter *in contumaciam*, were sentenced, on February 28, 1766, to the cruel punishment before mentioned.

I have also related how Parliament rejected La

Barre's appeal. He was taken back to Abbeville, where the execution was to take place.

Charles Henri Sanson was still asleep, on the morning after his arrival, when a loud knock was heard at the street door of the house; it was a turnkey, who brought an order of the criminal lieutenant for him to attend immediately at the Hôtel-de-Ville, whither the doomed young man had been transferred. On the way, the turnkey informed my grandfather that since La Barre had heard that the executioner of Paris had been summoned to Abbeville, he was very anxious to see him. He added that the criminal lieutenant, to whom the prisoner's desire was communicated, had answered: 'Tell M. de la Barre that he can have a sufficient look at him to-morrow;' and that he only yielded after the wish had been reiterated.

The Chevalier de la Barre was in a room on the ground floor of the Hôtel-de-Ville. The turnkey informed him that the person he wished to see was at hand; and as Charles Henri Sanson appeared on the threshold, M. de la Barre, who was sitting near the mantelpiece, rose to meet him.

M. de la Barre was barely twenty; his beardless face, delicate and regular features, and rather feminine beauty made him appear still younger than he really was. He was well formed and elegant; and under any other circumstances Charles Henri Sanson could not but have been struck by his noble and distinguished bearing; but he was too surprised at the extraordinary calmness of the young man at this terrible moment

to think of anything else: a slight pallor was the only symptom of emotion to be seen on his face, and a faint redness of the eyelids showed that he had shed a few tears.

He looked smilingly at the executioner, and apologised for disturbing him so early: 'The prospect of the deep sleep which I am to enjoy through you,' he said, 'has made me selfish. You are the man who decapitated Count de Lally-Tollendal, I think?'

This question was put in an easy and simple way which disconcerted my grandfather; and he could hardly find words to reply.

'You made him suffer outrageously,' added the Chevalier. 'I confess that this is the only feature of death that frightens me. I was always something of a coxcomb, and I cannot reconcile myself to the idea that my poor head, which they said was not altogether ugly, should horrify those who see it.'

Charles Henri answered that M. de Lally's violent agitation rather than the executioner's awkwardness was the cause of the accident. He added that decapitation was a gentleman's punishment, because it was necessary that the patient should show fortitude; and further, that the courage of the sufferer was as indispensable to its proper execution as the dexterity of the headsman. He added that the extraordinary coolness M. de la Barre was displaying while discoursing on what was for others a subject of terror, made him feel confident that his head would suffer no mutilation.

'Well,' said La Barre, 'I think I can give you satisfaction, but pray be careful;' after which he dismissed him. As Charles Henri Sanson was retiring, an old lady and a monk entered the room. It was Mdme. de Villancour, who came to bid farewell to the one she loved like a son, and who brought with her a confessor.

My grandfather remained at the Hôtel-de-Ville. At eight o'clock the criminal lieutenant arrived, and Charles Henri was struck by the contrast presented by the calm and serene countenance of the victim, and the agitated features of his judge. M. Duval de Soicourt's face was livid, his lips quivered, his eyes had a feverish look; he smiled continually, but his satisfaction was now less real than on the preceding day. It was not difficult to perceive that his conscience was unquiet. He went to and fro, hurried the preparations for departure, and from time to time he heaved deep sighs which betrayed the discomfort of his mind.

At length the cortége started (July 1, 1766). M. de la Barre had on his chest a placard on which the words 'infidel, blasphemer, abominable and execrable sacrilege' were written in large letters. His confessor, a monk of the order of St. Dominique, was on his right; the criminal lieutenant was on the other side. When the Chevalier saw him, a slight contraction was observed on his handsome face; he told my grandfather to stand on his left, and, Charles Henri having obeyed, he said in a loud voice, looking at M. Duval de Soicourt:

'It is better so; between the doctor of the soul and the doctor of the body, what need I fear?'

He was taken before the porch of Saint Wulfranc, where he was to make amende honorable; but he energetically refused to pronounce the usual words of the formula. 'To confess my guilt,' he cried, 'would be to offend God by a falsehood; I cannot do it.'

When he was on the scaffold, my grandfather noticed that his colour vanished, but he recovered his self-possession in a moment. The monk was quite overpowered. Charles Henri Sanson told his assistants to give him his sword. The Chevalier wished to see it, passed his finger along the edge, and, having made sure that it was of good steel and sharp, he said to the executioner:

'Now, master, strike with a firm hand, for I am not afraid.'

My grandfather looked at the young man, quite surprised.

'But, Monsieur le Chevalier,' he said, 'you must kneel.'

'I cannot; I am no criminal. I refused to make amende honorable. Strike me as I am.'[1]

Charles Henri Sanson knew not what to do. 'Now then, be quick,' added the Chevalier, in a tone of impatience.

Then occurred a fact singular enough to be recorded here. My grandfather handled his sword with so much

[1] M. Charles Louandre, of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, has adduced proofs that the Chevalier de la Barre was quite innocent of an offence which, in any case, it was monstrous to punish with death.—N. ED.

vigour and dexterity, that it severed the spine and went through the neck without dislodging the head from the shoulders. It was only when the body fell that it rolled on the boards of the scaffold, to the amazement of the witnesses of this extraordinary feat.

This unprecedented incident has been taken up by chroniclers, and all kinds of stories in prose and in verse have been invented thereon. They are all innaccurate. An unscrupulous writer has even asserted that my grandfather, proud of his success, turned to the crowd and said:

'Was it not a fine blow?'

It is my duty, in justice to my grandfather and to our sinister corporation, to contradict these shameless words, which would have soiled even the lips of a headsman. The executioner who exercises his profession because he likes it, and who admires his talents of destruction, is an absurd fiction. If there are, in history, monsters cruel by instinct and sanguinary by system, they are not to be found in our ranks. I have, of course, known many of my confrères; and if most of them were not, to the same degree as myself, victims of their birth and family traditions, I can nevertheless affirm that none discharged functions so antipathetic to the natural sentiments of men without a feeling of shame.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EXECUTIONER AND THE PARLIAMENT.

THE executions which have been described in the preceding chapters have compelled me to set aside for a while the part of these memoirs which relates to the autobiography of my family, and which, according to my plan, should be presented simultaneously with the documents quoted in the course of the present judicial history. I now return to our private matters.

When I interrupted these domestic records, Charles Sanson had just died, and his widow, Marthe Dubut, had obtained for her eldest son, Charles Jean-Baptiste Sanson, aged seven years, the position of his father. Man becomes used to everything, and of this I myself have been a sad proof; but it is from the time of Charles Jean-Baptiste that my family seems to have quite reconciled itself, and to have accepted a kind of identification with the bloody appanage which it already regarded as hereditary. Jean-Baptiste was a child, and he never knew the gloomy feelings of his grandfather, nor his father's melancholy. Prepared for the calling which he was to adopt, he never aspired to a higher one.

Marthe Dubut had tenderly loved Charles Sanson; in her reverence for his memory she desired that her sons should not be ashamed of their father; and to prevent this she decided that they should follow his profession. Not satisfied with the success of her eldest son, she also solicited and obtained for her second son the office of executioner of the Prévoté-de-l'Hôtel. We have seen by the execution of Damiens how ill-fitted the poor fellow was for such an office. Not so with Charles Jean-Baptiste Sanson. He was like his mother, and almost liked his profession. I said that his extreme youth left a gap in our family annals; there was another reason for this lacuna: at a *competent* age, to use the expression which describes, in his letters of nomination, the time when he could discharge his functions, he continued his father's and grandfather's record at some intervals and with an unwilling hand. It is easy to perceive that, being less impressed than they were by the scenes in which he took the most conspicuous part, he had little to say about them. A few notes constitute the only tribute he thought fit to render to the old custom of his predecessors; and these notes are so vague that it is difficult to use them.

It is only in the month of January 1755, when my grandfather is holding the pen, that I find some interesting information with a few details. He dwells first on the execution of one Ruxton, who was broken for murdering M. Andrieu, a barrister; then that of De Montgeot, an engineer who, after an imprisonment of two years, suffered the same punishment for the

same crime committed on the person of M. Lescombat, an architect. This lamentable affair is well known. Blinded by a fatal affection, De Montgeot murdered Lescombat, and tried to ward off suspicion by calling the patrol to his help, and pretending that he slew his victim in self-defence. This statement met with no credit, and De Montgeot was executed. Exasperated by the heartlessness of his paramour, Mdme. Lescombat, he denounced her as his accomplice. The woman was confronted with him at the foot of the scaffold. She was remarkably handsome, and she tried the effect of her charms on her judges, but without avail. She was sentenced to die, and was hanged on the Place de Grève.

A month afterwards, the execution of one Dufrancey, a magistrate of La Marche, took place. This man charged a merchant named Roy with inciting a number of soldiers of the guard to murder him. He afterwards attempted to withdraw the indictment; but it was too late, and he was called upon to prove his allegations. Dufrancey paid false witnesses to corroborate his charge, and persuaded them that the prisoner was in no danger of capital punishment. When the fourth witness came forward, the unfortunate Roy, appalled by the evidence, exclaimed: 'What have I done to you, that you should bring me to the scaffold? I do not even know you, and I never saw you before!'

The witness, who was a painter, answered: 'What! to the scaffold? I was not aware that the consequences were so serious.' These words excited suspicion. The

man was sharply cross-examined, and the whole truth came out. The three other false witnesses were immediately arrested; their trial was soon concluded, and, after being tortured, they were broken on the wheel with the man who had corrupted them.

These are the only facts I can find in Jean-Baptiste Sanson's notes. In the month of January 1754 he had had an attack of paralysis from which he never completely recovered. We have seen him finding again some strength at the execution of Count de Lally; but he relapsed into his former state of weakness, and bestowed little attention on anything, much less on circumstances relating to his profession.

By his marriage with Madeleine Tronson he had ten children; three daughters and seven sons. All the boys selected their father's profession. One became executioner at Rheims, another at Orleans, another at Meaux, a fourth at Etampes, a fifth at Soissons, and a sixth at Montpellier; and the seventh succeeded to his father. When, on certain occasions, all Jean-Baptiste's children met at the same table, the family gathering wore a patriarchal appearance. The grandmother, Marthe Dubut, who reached a very old age, was seated at one end of the table; and facing her was her son, whose paralysis gave him an appearance not devoid of majesty. It was in these gatherings that the servants, forgetting the Christian names of the sons of Jean-Baptiste, began to designate them by the names of their jurisdictions, and said in turn, Monsieur de Rheims, Monsieur de Soissons, Monsieur d'Orleans, &c., a habit

which was preserved in our profession, although it had no other origin.

The eldest, Charles Henri Sanson, who was called Monsieur de Paris, was undoubtedly morally and physically superior to his brothers. Handsome and well-formed, he possessed a superior intellect moulded by an excellent education. He was extremely elegant, and had drawn upon himself so much attention by the richness of his dress that a somewhat arbitrary measure was taken, which forbade him to wear blue because it was the colour of noblemen. Charles Henri might have shown the papers of the Longval family and raised the question whether the office of executioner was a disgrace. His manner of protesting consisted in wearing still more gorgeous costumes of green cloth. He gave fashion to this colour, and all the beaux of the Court, the brilliant Marquis de Létorières at their head, adopted the cut and colour of his garments and wore coats à la Sanson.

From my grandfather's time commences the most curious and now uninterrupted sequence of these memoirs. But, before giving the notes he left concerning the Revolution, I cannot do better, to introduce him, than quote an adventure of his youth. Of this he left an autograph account, which I textually give:

'After a long day's shooting, I was entering an inn at dinner time, when I found myself in the company of Mdme. le Marquise de X——, who was returning from her country-house to Paris. This lady bowed, offered me a seat, and, after half an hour's conversation, she at

length asked me what my profession was. Of course I replied that I was an officer of Parliament. She immediately requested that our dinners should be served together, and we made such a gay and pleasant repast that on both sides it seemed as if the heart had something to do with our conversation.

'After dessert, I ordered my horses and postchaise, and retired, after profusely thanking the lady for her gracious greeting; but hardly had I left the room when a gentleman who was acquainted with the Marquise came up and asked her:

'"Madame, do you know the young man who has just dined with you?"

'"No," she answered; "he told me he was an officer of Parliament."

'"He is the executioner of Paris; I know him quite well. He has just executed a man; or rather superintended an execution, for he seldom does the work himself."

'At these words the Marquise nearly fainted. She remained speechless with confusion, shed tears, and, remembering that I had touched her hand, she asked for a basin and water and washed her hands. She stepped into her carriage full of anger, and during her journey she thought of the means of avenging herself. Shortly after her arrival in Paris she presented a petition to Parliament in which, after relating what had taken place, she asked that I should be sentenced to beg her pardon, with a rope round my neck, for the insult of which she said I had been guilty; and that,

for the safety of the public, I should henceforth wear a distinctive sign so that all should know me.

'The Court summoned the parties concerned to appear before it. I sought a barrister everywhere to take my case in hand; but either owing to the influence of Mdme. la Marquise, which was great, or because of a reluctance to appear as the advocate of the executioner, no one would undertake to act as my counsel, and I was obliged to conduct my own case.

'The advocate of the plaintiff forgot nothing, and laid stress on the flagrant insult Mdme. la Marquise had to complain of. He described with much eloquence the sad situation of the poor lady, after she had been informed of the profession of the man with whom she had dined. He said that my infamous calling did not allow me to eat even in the company of a mere bourgeois; far less could I do so with a person of Madame's rank; and he concluded by asking that his client's demands should be granted.

'I answered in the following terms:

'"It is fortunate for me, gentlemen, that, being charged before you as a criminal, nothing is alleged against my honesty. Thank Heaven, my conscience is burthened by no misdeed human justice has a right to deal with; my only crime is that I discharge functions that are held to be infamous and disgraceful. Now, I ask you, gentlemen, whether there are infamous and disgraceful functions in the State?

'"Infamy is the appanage of crime, and where there is no crime there cannot be infamy. The discharge of

my functions is not criminal; on the contrary, it is an act of justice; and the same principle of equity which leads you to pass a sentence actuates me when I have to inflict the penalty upon the culprit. The plaintiff did not reflect when she summoned me before you. If I had claimed your equity, she might have complained and suspected you. The fact is that our functions are connected together to such a degree that mine cannot be stigmatised without mortal imputation on yours. I merely act in obedience to your orders, and if there was aught reprehensible in my avocations it would redound to your discredit, since, by the essence of the laws, the one who orders a crime is more guilty than the person who commits it.

"I am quite aware that all public offices are not equally honourable; they are creditable only because they are useful to society; but according to the latter principle mine stands in the first rank. What would the State do if it were suppressed for one single day? The whole kingdom would be a vast field of brigandage; impunity giving encouragement to all passions, the most sacred laws would be trodden under foot, virtue would be despised and vice would prevail. There would be no other law than the law of the strongest; murder, rapine, and theft would be fearlessly committed under the very eyes of Justice. It would be useless to punish and condemn; pecuniary penalties do not frighten penniless brigands; sentences entailing physical penalties would be laughed at if there was no one to carry them out; for I venture to say it, gentlemen, fearless of forgetting

the respect due to you, they do not fear your sentences, nor the pen of the clerk of the Court; it is my sword which makes them tremble; it is in the shadow of that sword that innocence breathes freely, that the police are powerful, and that public order prevails.

'"The God of armies has placed the sword in the hands of the King to punish crime and protect innocence. Being unwilling to wield it himself, he has done me the honour to entrust it to my hands. I am the guardian of this treasure, which is the finest appanage of his royalty and the distinctive emblem of his sovereignty. It is not to you, properly speaking, that he has given it in trust; the culprit deserves punishment because of his crime, not of your sentence; or, to speak more accurately, it is the law which inflicts punishment; you merely declare that he is convicted of a crime, and consequently, in the case of capital punishment, I, as public minister, use the weapon wherewith I have been entrusted. I punish crime and avenge outraged virtue; this gives to my employment a pre-eminence and a degree of elevation which brings it in closer connection with the throne.

'"I know that my office is considered dishonourable because I slay men; hence the feeling of horror with which I am regarded. This is the result of mere prejudice, which must soon be dispelled if the facts are examined without prejudice. There is no disgrace in shedding blood when the weal of the State demands it; it is even an honourable function. Witness the profession of arms which is highly esteemed, although it

has for its object to shed the blood of the enemy. Ask a soldier what his profession is; he will tell you that, like me, he is a slayer of men. Yet his company is never shunned, and no one thinks he is disgraced by eating in his company. For what reason do people despise in my profession functions which are deemed creditable in men of war? If there be any difference between us, surely it is to my advantage; for who does a soldier slay? Innocents, very honourable men whose only crime is that they do their duty! It makes the tears of widows and orphans flow; whereas, in the accomplishment of my avocations, I respect innocence, I only kill culprits; and a man who has done his duty has no reason to fear me. I merely purge society of the monsters who disturb its repose.

'"By this parallel I do not pretend to diminish the esteem that is due to the noble profession of arms. Soldiers watch our frontier, foil the attempts of our enemies, and ensure for us the priceless boon of peace; it is only just to honour a calling which is so useful to society; but I do not fear to say, gentlemen, that, however useful the profession of arms may seem to you, mine is still more indispensable. Soldiers only repress external raids. They have to fight but rarely; lapses of twenty years have passed without the army being called to action; whereas I preserve peace at home; I continually restrain the insolence of the bad citizens who disturb the public peace; and scarcely a week elapses without there being occasion for me to punish crime and avenge the rights of innocence. Thus I am more useful

to the public, and my help is particularly efficacious ; for each solitary soldier, each officer, contributes but in a small degree to the happiness of the State ; the glory of preserving public tranquillity is divided among so many thousand men, that each individual has only a small share of the privilege. On the other hand, in my profession lies the advantage of alone ensuring public tranquillity, and I can say without exaggeration that I alone in my vast department secure quiet more effectually than a hundred thousand men can do on behalf of the State.

'"Do not believe, gentlemen, that, in defending the unjustly attacked prerogatives of my office, I claim any personal merit ; I know that a function, however brilliant, is always distinct from the individual who holds it. The real glory of man lies in virtue and the proper accomplishment of his duties, and I never sought any other. I should not assuredly have attempted to vindicate the duties of my office if the injustice of my enemies had not obliged me to do so. As I lay no claim to the glory of my functions, it would be unjust to cast upon me the opprobrium which the thoughtless have seen fit to attach to them, and to call me infamous because it is alleged that my office deserves the epithet.

'"The advocate of the plaintiff, not finding in the exercise of my office sufficient grounds to describe it as contemptible, has alluded to the unworthiness of those who hold it. Men deserving death, said he, and sentenced to capital punishment, have saved their

lives by undertaking the hateful task which no one else would accomplish. This, it must be admitted, has occasionally happened, and the deplorable blindness of men should be regretted in such circumstances. Several honest men who could have served society with profit in the functions of this important office, blinded by prejudice, gave them up and were compelled to remit them to less worthy hands; but what does this prove? Just as a lofty office confers no degree of merit on a sot who happens to hold it, in the same way the demerit of the holder cannot in any manner affect the office and dishonour it. If I had gained mine by the means he describes, his argument against me would be, I admit, conclusive; but such is not the case. I have the honour to be the fourth of my family to whom it has descended from father to son, and if hereditary nobility were attached to it, as it ought to be, I might stand on even ground with Mdme. la Marquise.

'"You laugh, gentlemen, at the word 'hereditary.' I cannot find anything extraordinary or preposterous in it. Military offices, which have the same functions as mine, and which, as I have observed, are inferior to it, enjoy the same advantage. Yours, gentlemen—allow me to say so, yours—which only contribute to the public weal in an indirect way, while mine has a more direct application, have the same privilege. Why is the concession denied to my office? It will not be denied, I suppose, that I am a member of Parliament, and perhaps, I may say, one of its most useful members. None among you gentlemen, can, individually, ensure

public happiness effectually; none can pronounce a sentence except in conjunction with all the other members of the body. Thus you never act otherwise than as members; whereas I procure peace alone, and I act as a chief. Now every chief is respectable, and to whatever category he may belong he should enjoy the privilege of nobility. The general prosecutor, who is the chief of his department, has it; so does the chief clerk of the Court. Why should I be deprived of it by an unrighteous exception? I will press no further the sovereign reasons suggested by the justice of my case; I merely point them out, as you may see. Men of my profession can act better than they can speak, handle the sword better than make a speech; I believe, nevertheless, that I have said enough to urge confidently that Mdme. la Marquise should be nonsuited. I might urge a plea against her, but I consider the weakness of her case as a sufficient rebuke. I therefore ask, not that the alleged infamy of my office be removed, for no infamy is attached to it, but that it be declared that not only am I a member of the Sovereign Court, but that I am the head of my department; that my office has particular resemblance to the profession of arms; that, in consequence, I have a right to the prerogative of gown and sword; and I further ask that, in virtue of this twofold title, nobility be conferred upon me, as well as upon my posterity; and I am confident that you cannot but grant my petition."

'The advocate for the plaintiff perceived that my speech had impressed the judges, and he hastened to

reply. "I do not know, gentlemen," he said, "whether the speech you have just heard is worthy of your contempt, or whether it should not excite your indignation.

'"What! a wretched executioner presume to compare himself to you, and even dare to claim pre-eminence! He claims the lead of the officers of Parliament. What! although soldiers expose their lives for the safety of the State, their glory does not equal his; and he asks for nobility! In fact, he is the first functionary of the State! I will not stoop to discuss his arguments. It is sufficient to observe that the contempt and hatred that are felt for his office are as old as the world; they are common to all nations and all times. It is an innate sentiment, a cry of the heart, which discards this minister of death; one can never see him without feeling secret horror, and our eyes cannot but seek on his clothes marks of his cruelty; it always seems to us that he is reeking with human blood. Let him say what he likes; no argument can stand against the sentiment he inspires; as long as his profession is to shed blood and destroy men, nature must recoil before him.

'"Think of it, gentlemen; believe the impulse of nature, and I am sure Mdme. la Marquise shall win the day."

'I looked at him with pride and contempt, and answered:

'"I did not think that it required so little to be an advocate. Since it is thus, and if I am contradicted again, I can become a lawyer in three days. What!

you rejoice in the title and you argue so lamely? I beg you to observe, gentlemen, that feeling how impossible it is for him to answer my arguments, he merely attacks my conclusions and tries to turn them into ridicule; he allows the premises, to use a legal expression, and denies the consequence. A curious answer, indeed! He should have attacked my principles and denied the consequences. He does neither the one nor the other; he knows that what I have said is so true that he cannot even doubt it. He is angry with me because I said that my calling is equal to the military profession, and that it is closely linked with your office. I am sorry for him, but this truth is so clearly proved that I defy him, or anyone else, to refute it. He feels that common sense is against him. He appeals to sentiment; a paltry trick, indeed! He says that he feels a loathing for my office; I suppose he does experience such a sentiment since he says so. But, as for me, I assure you that I feel quite differently. He boldly asserts that all men feel like him. How can he say? Innate sentiment is only known to those who feel it. And even if he were right, what of that? It would be a traditional prejudice, a result of education. This horror is just what I complain of. The question is whether this horror is equitable, and this my opponent refuses to argue. The only reason on which he bases the alleged infamy of my profession is that its object is the death of men. I have already observed that it is not disgraceful to shed blood for the welfare of the State. I will only add a few comments which will demonstrate my right, and show

the bad faith and ignorance of the advocate of Mdme. la Marquise, who asserts that at all times my office has been loathed by the public. Is he not aware, then, that among the ancients it was the custom to entrust the functions I discharge to the most meritorious in the State? Solomon, the wisest of all kings, knew what glory was, and when he wished to bestow on some one a token of his friendship, he gave him an office similar to mine. Benaiah, the captain of his guards and his favourite, was invested with this dignity.

'"It is true that there was no Parliament at the time. There was only the sovereign and his executioner for the maintenance of order. These two dignitaries were correlative, and one could not subsist without the other. Solomon alone pronounced judgment, and Benaiah alone could carry it out. Joab had prevaricated; the king sentenced him to death, and Benaiah killed him: '*Interfice eum et sepeli*,' said the king to him. Shimei suffered a like fate. David acted in a similar manner. A young page for whom he felt affection was entrusted by him with the execution of the criminal Amalekite, who had borne a sacrilegious hand on the person of Saul, king of Israel. My opponent knows nothing of history, or is merely trying to deceive the Court. Confess, gentlemen, that if the King had attached a salary of one hundred and fifty thousand livres to my office, together with suitable privileges, it would be the finest office in the State. If you still doubt this, let us attack my adversary's principles. So long as my profession consists in shedding blood and slaying men, my profession must

remain infamous, and nature must recoil from me. Such is his argument. If it is just, all those who make a profession of shedding blood should share my fate. The principle is common to all, and the consequence applies to all in the same way. Thereby he stigmatises all soldiers; he wounds the natural sentiments and tastes of all nations which always regarded them with favour. According to him, a brave officer who retires from battle covered with dust and blood should be regarded as an unnatural monster, deserving of horror and contempt. Who does not feel the absurdity of such reasoning? He is bound to admit it or to discard his principle; to excuse a soldier because he attacks armed men and risks his life is a frivolous exception; his profession is, all the same, bloodshed and killing. Thus the principle can apply to him as well as to me. Six armed soldiers co-operate against a poor deserter, who is pinioned and unable to defend himself; they blow his brains out, and they certainly do not risk their lives in so doing; and yet no one will venture to think them sullied. But what is the use of so many subterfuges. It is certain that it is neither humiliating nor low to shed blood when the safety of the State demands it. It is even an honourable function. My office is the only one which it is intended to except. And if I ask by what right, no other answer can be given except that this state of things springs from fancy and prejudice. Who, among sensible men, would be guided by ideas that are in contradiction to sound reason, which give the name of virtue to vice, and of vice to virtue?

'"A man kills his enemy in a duel; that is, he transgresses all divine and human laws. He deserves the worst punishment; he should become in the eyes of the world an object of horror; no one should eat with him, or even speak to him? Not at all: fancy decrees that he should be regarded as a man of honour, and his crime as an act of valour. How unfortunate is the age we live in! Fancy is supreme; virtue is oppressed, and vice condoned! What! an infamous duellist who has just killed a human creature to satisfy his brutality is to be considered an honest man, while a deserving individual, who serves society in the most important function of the State, is to be regarded as a ruffian who cannot sit down at table with any other person! It is a disgrace to our century. It is your duty, gentlemen, to discard this perverse taste. You cannot do better than grant the prayer I address to you. I ask no favour; but I expect everything of your equity."'

The Court retired to confer, and decided that the case should be indefinitely adjourned. More than a century after this judgment was pronounced, I publish my grandfather's curious brief, in which he attempted a rehabilitation, nay, a glorification which never occurred to me. I abstain from any remark. What are the arguments of logic against that innate feeling which, as the advocate of the Marchioness very well said, must always predominate? Innate feeling honours the soldier, absolves the duellist, and brands the executioner; but how can it condemn him without also discarding capital punishment?

I now return to my family and Charles Henri Sanson. I have yet to relate his first love, which is interesting for more than one reason, inasmuch as the object of his affection was Marie Jeanne Gomart Vaubernier, who was to be the Comtesse du Barry.

CHAPTER XV.

FAMILY ANECDOTES.

I HAVE given a faithful description of Marthe Dubut, widow of Charles Sanson II., who enjoyed a long life and saw her descendants multiply in the profession she contributed to maintain in the family. I have not, however, sufficiently dwelt on the career of Charles Jean-Baptiste Sanson, her son, who was the father of the numerous lineage which we have seen spreading over France in the capacity of executioners. However, I must neglect M. de Rheims, M. de Provins, and the others in favour of Monsieur de Paris, the head of the family, and the most important functionary of his order. The house of the executioner of Paris always held the first rank; it was a kind of metropolis, of which the provincial executioners considered themselves suffragans. We were often sent out into the provinces to superintend executions; advice was regularly asked of us by our subordinates, and a constant correspondence was carried on between Paris and the other chief towns of the country. I may add that some of our confrères of the departments sent us their sons as assistants for a certain time, that they might acquire ability in the profession. We seldom

refused to receive such pupils, and we admitted the novices, who sat at our table as long as they remained with us.

When the number of Charles Jean-Baptiste's children is remembered, one may have an idea of the numerous company which assembled in the dining room of our house. Charles Jean-Baptiste shared his mother's singular ideas and strange principles; both were much respected by their children and the strangers who found hospitality under their roof. The life of Charles Jean-Baptiste was very active and left him but little time for amusement. He studied anatomy with fervency, as Sanson de Longval had done. He possessed the science to a greater degree than any of my ancestors. He always rose early; after a light meal, he went to church at Saint Laurent and returned to his house, where he received a certain number of patients whom he treated according to their ailings. These consultations lasted until dinner time. After dinner the family took a stroll in the garden, and then my great-grandfather returned to his laboratory, where he prepared his medicines or pursued his studies. At dusk, until supper was served, he sat down before his door, and breathed the fresh air. He occasionally encountered the hostile look of some neighbour; but he found ample compensation for such signs of contempt in the bows of a throng of paupers and patients who always found assistance and advice under his roof.

It is difficult to explain the psychological phenomena by which many of us have been enabled to unite with

a profession for which I have always felt repugnance the practice of the highest virtue. I could quote many instances; that, among others, of the executioner Gasnier, of Rennes, who, in his jurisdiction, was the providence of the poor, and who had earned so much consideration that the members of the local Parliament often came to see him, walked with him in his garden, and even asked for his advice. I can mention in favour of my family, if not tokens of esteem and sympathy as flattering, a course of conduct which deserved such gratifying marks. Connection between the magistracy of Paris and the executioner was less direct than in the provinces, and since the Revolution this connection has steadily decreased. It was never given to members of the Parliament and of the Court of Paris to know the moral worth of the family in which was transmitted from father to son an office to which even French legislation persists in ascribing the lowest rank. But the recollections my ancestors have left in the localities in which they dwelt are highly flattering to them. Despite of the reprobation which was attached to their functions, they were escorted to the grave by a numerous cortége of paupers, and I remember that a similar event happened when I took my poor father to his last resting-place.

These reflections can especially be applied to Charles Jean-Baptiste Sanson, who was essentially a good and charitable man. Before the cruel illness which afflicted his old age, and led him to seek refuge in the small farm of Brie-Comte-Robert, which, since Sanson de

Longval's time, had ever been the country residence of Messieurs de Paris, he led the regular existence of which I have given the exact description. It was on one of the evenings which he spent before his door in the manner I have described that he received a singular visit. A legend had been circulated concerning the executioner's house to the effect that, having found his own son guilty of one of the crimes which are punished by law, the headsman had tried him and carried out his own sentence by slaying his son. The rigidity and austere principles of Charles Jean-Baptiste Sanson were as well known as his kindliness, and the high opinion entertained of him may have given rise to this fable concerning a Brutus of the scaffold. The story was told everywhere and reached Versailles; and Louis XV. was nearly induced to enquire of my great-grandfather whether it was true. However he forgot the whole matter; but certain lords and courtiers, allured by the prospect of a mysterious drama, determined to ascertain the truth.

Charles Jean-Baptiste Sanson was reclining on one of the stone seats which stood on either side of his gate, when a rich carriage drove up, and a man with strongly-marked features stepped out and advanced. Without even raising his three-cornered hat, he walked up to my great-grandfather and asked him whether it was true that he had killed his son.

Charles Jean-Baptiste shrugged his shoulders: 'Indeed, sir,' he replied, 'allow me to say that your question is at least singular. Do you think that a father capable

of shedding his son's blood out of a sense of duty would be foolish enough to reveal such a secret to the first idle courtier who questioned him?'

The stranger turned red: 'Do you know who you are speaking to?' said he; 'I am the Count de Charolais.'

'I am much honoured by your highness's query,' answered my ancestor. 'I am sure, at least, that, in spite of the severity of the laws which punish attempts on the lives of princes, I shall never have to exercise my function in connection with you, for if I were to believe what is said of your highness, as you believed what was said of me, the King, our Sire, has promised to pardon the man who takes your life as you took that of an innocent man.'

The Count turned pale with anger: 'I have a good mind,' replied he, 'to punish your insolence with a thrust of my sword. But this would confirm the absurd calumny which you have just repeated. Know that this accusation against me of the murder of a tiler is the most egregious of falsehoods. If a man did really perish in the manner described, it was not by my hand; the murderer was my brother, Count de Clermont—if such a word as murderer can be applied to a man who is deprived of his senses.'

The story of Count de Charolais firing upon a tiler, to show his dexterity, while the poor artisan was working on a roof, was so generally told at the time, that my great-grandfather had never doubted it. It was said that the King had only condoned the murder

on condition that the reprieve should extend to any relation or friend of the deceased who might attempt to avenge his victim. Charles Jean-Baptiste was, therefore, extremely surprised when he heard the Count denying a crime which was so universally imputed to him, and which he was even accused of regarding as a trifling occurrence. The altogether new version which he gave had a semblance of truth, for his brother had frequently exhibited the behaviour of a lunatic, and my ancestor experienced a revulsion of feeling in favour of this prince who, if public opinion charged him erroneously, was more deserving of pity than of blame. He therefore apologised for his want of politeness, and after satisfying the Count's curiosity by showing him Charles Henri Sanson, who was playing in the garden, unaware of the fate which he was said to have undergone, he ventured a few questions concerning the murder of the tiler. The Count amply confirmed what he had said before ; it was his brother, Count de Clermont and Abbé de Saint-Germain-des-prés, who committed the crime while in a fit of mental aberration. As for himself, he had nothing to do with it, and he even invoked the evidence of one of his attendants.

'Chesneau,' said he to a young man who was respectfully waiting at a short distance for his master's orders, 'come forward and tell this good man whether it was my brother, the Abbé, who killed the tiler.'

The young man confirmed Charolais' statement. The conversation, so unpleasantly commenced, ended in mutual confidences. Singularly enough, Count de

Charolais, in spite of his rank, became almost a friend of my great-grandfather's, and never failed to call upon him whenever he came to Paris. The Count, during his sojourn in the capital, lived in a mansion of the Rue des Poissonniers, and was therefore our neighbour. The faithful Chesneau always accompanied him. Jean-Baptiste reaped the benefit of his acquaintance. Since the edict which, under the Regency, had suppressed the right of *travage* and replaced it by a permanent salary of sixteen thousand livres a year, Charles Jean-Baptiste and his father had been very irregularly paid; they were sent from one treasury to another, and the poverty of the State greatly contributed to this delay in giving satisfaction to the legitimate demands of my ancestors. A large sum was owed to them. Charles Sanson II. saw the Regent, who, impressed by the justice of his application, gave him fifty thousand livres in notes of the Royal Bank; but these notes were already discredited; my great-grandfather could never use them, and I have them still in my possession.

Count de Charolais interfered with the King on behalf of Charles Jean-Baptiste, and the latter at length received a considerable sum of which he had the greatest need, for during the time of non-payment he had defrayed the expenses of his office out of his own pocket.

With regard to this prince, my father and grandfather never doubted his innocence, although he has ever been accused of the tiler's murder. The Count was rough,

passionate, and haughty, and his relationship to the real perpetrator of the crime gave rise to a charge which his temper, but not his action, might have confirmed. 'If it was not you, it was your brother,' posterity can say; but this brother was a madman. I cannot otherwise explain the contradictions of the chroniclers of the time, some of whom maintain, while others strenuously deny, an event which has been handed down to us by hearsay. I believe that if, by excess of pride or too chivalrous devotion to his brother, the prince had not disdained to give a public explanation, his memory might now be washed of a stain which it still bears.

Neither was it true that Louis XV. disliked Count de Charolais; far from this, he received him *en tête-à-tête*, and the Count often attended his intimate gatherings. This we heard from the man Chesneau, whom I mentioned before, and who had on more than one occasion waited on the King and the Count at suppers to which only members of the male sex were admitted. Louis XV., worthy pupil of the Regent, had all the defects of his race; but he was very aristocratic, and although he loaded with favour the Duke de Richelieu, the Marquis de Chauvelin, and a few other boon companions, it is certain that he more willingly gave vent to his instincts in the presence of a prince of his own blood, before whom, he imagined, royal majesty appeared less lowered. It was only after the death of Charolais, which occurred in 1760, that the King allowed his favourites to have their own way, and lost the scanty dignity which had partially veiled his faults.

Chesneau was very clever as an armourer and engraver; he manufactured excellent and remarkably elegant guns. His talents were the chief cause of the affection which Charolais felt for him. One day Chesneau was testing a carbine in the gardens of the Hôtel-de-Charolais, when the weapon burst and seriously wounded the young man in the arm and wrist. The Count remembered the chirurgical reputation of my great-grandfather; he requested him to receive the wounded man in his house, and to take care of him. My ancestor probed the wound, which was not dangerous, and two months after Chesneau was cured. The poor fellow was eternally grateful to us, and remained a stout friend to our family.

After the death of Count de Charolais, Chesneau became one of Louis XV.'s servants; Louis XVI. in his turn had him in his service, and as this prince was a passionate lover of mechanical arts, he held Chesneau's merit in high esteem. But when the Revolution broke out the favour of princes became a danger. Chesneau, who had accompanied his master from Versailles to Paris, was driven out of the Tuileries on August 10. He felt the danger of wearing the Court livery, to which he had been accustomed during the whole of his life; he thought of the house in which he had found kindness and hospitality when he was wounded; and he knocked at our door. Jean-Baptiste Sanson was dead; but his son was not less hospitable than his father was. He gave his hand to the old man and offered him a shelter during the storm. Strange to say, the servant of a prince and

two kings had made no fortune in the gilded atmosphere of the Court. He had eaten his daily bread without thinking of the morrow. What little money he received he spent in the satisfaction of his artistic tastes; he bought arms of all countries, and had a valuable collection of these, which was left behind and dispersed.

Idleness and dependence were alike distasteful to Chesneau, and he endeavoured to justify his presence under my grandfather's roof by useful work. For a long time Charles Henri would not suffer him to do anything beyond manufacturing weapons; but when the poor old man had presented his host with magnificent arms, it was impossible to prevent him from giving his attention to the machine which had just replaced all other instruments of torture. On several occasions under the Terror he was heard blaming the assistants for some neglect, and he insisted on seeing to the good order of the guillotine. 'When so many good people perish on the scaffold,' he used to say, 'it is of no use to make them suffer. Kill them, *Mordieu*! since you are obliged, but do not massacré them.'

I was so young when old Chesneau died, that I have but a faint remembrance of him. All that I can recollect is, that he was a sprightly little old man, who used to swing me very agreeably between two large trees in our garden, and who made me a present on January 3, 1803, of a charming little gun on which was engraved, 'Chesneau, to his young friend M. Henri.'

The worthy man died in 1802. I could not then

comprehend all the teachings contained in his life, which began near the throne and ended near the scaffold; but since then I have often thought of Chesneau; and I do not think it possible to select a more perfect impersonation of revolutionary cataclysms than the life of this man, which began with the hospitality of kings and ended with that of the executioner.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ABBE GOMART.

I HAVE now to speak of a third friend of our family, whose attachment was so lasting that it extended from Jean-Baptiste Sanson to my grandfather. This friend was Dom Ange Modeste Gomart, of the order of the Récollets, Abbé of Picpus.

At the end of the reign of Louis XIV. and under the Regency only doctors of the Sorbonne were allowed to accompany culprits to the scaffold ; but under Louis XV. and Louis XVI. this custom was abandoned, and the most suitable ecclesiastics were picked out of every religious order for the purpose. The venerable Father Gomart was designated for the dismal duty of accompanying culprits, and during the greater part of the career of my grandfather he faithfully discharged it. None was more fitted for such functions. His face was kind, his eloquence was soft and persuasive, and the most hardened hearts seldom remained untouched by his words. A deep sentiment of duty had alone induced him to accept a task which he could only accomplish at the cost of a great effort. His strength frequently failed him in the slow and cruel executions

during which he was compelled to remain near the culprit and wipe away the perspiration that flowed from his brow. This always occurred when the punishment by the wheel, so often resorted to by the Parliament, took place. My great-grandfather and my grandfather could see the poor priest's distress, and they often came to his assistance. Once they took him away in such a state of weakness that he was unable to return to the convent where he resided, and he was obliged to accept our hóspitality for a few hours. Touched by the affectionate attention which was shown to him, he surmounted the horror which he doubtless felt for the profession of his hosts, and henceforth showed real affection for those who shared his painful duties. He often visited my grandfather, and came to dine at our house every Friday.

It was said that Father Gomart had had a stormy life, and that the peacefulness of his physiognomy concealed a soul which had been strongly tested by passions. He had entered orders after experiencing great sorrows. Neither my father nor my grandfather could ever ascertain his antecedents. They were induced to think that the romance of his youth was much exaggerated by those who spoke of it. He was sufficiently communicative, and, when at our table, he expressed his uneasiness concerning a young niece of his who lived in Paris, and whose light and dissipated habits were for him a constant reason for alarm. 'She is the child of sin,' said he; 'I fear she feels the influence of her birth.'

This girl, whose name was Marie Jeanne de Vaubernier, had been educated at the convent of Saint Anne, under the apparent care of her godfather, M. Billard de Monceau, but in reality under the protection of the worthy Abbé, who had some reasons for concealing from a part of society the affection he bore her. Education had produced no beneficial result on her mind. Her tastes were thoroughly mundane; and, at her earnest entreaty, she was apprenticed to a famous dressmaker named Labille. This change was the cause of her loss. In this situation, which enabled her to see every day the *élégantes* of the Court and town, her coquetry rapidly increased, and filled her with a wish to emulate the brilliant models she saw. Jeanne's beauty was remarkable, and there was no doubt that her success would be great if she could appear on a scene worthy of her charms. The girl fell a prey to her ambition: without her uncle being able to prevent her, she began to lead a life of sin and dissipation.

Jean-Baptiste Sanson heard every day the Abbé Gomart's expressions of grief. He did not speak openly of her dissolute habits, but he alluded to her with bitterness, and he constantly deplored the privilege of fatal beauty which was the chief cause of her loss. My grandfather, Charles Henri Sanson, was then in the full strength and exuberance of youth. His imagination was heated by the priest's description of his niece, and he soon felt a burning wish to make the acquaintance of a girl so beautiful, who was exposed to such peril. There always mingles something noble and chivalrous

with the first impulse of a young heart; and a secret desire, a vague hope, to lead the girl back to the path of virtue was blended in Charles Henri Sanson's mind with feverish impatience to know the belle so often described by the Abbé Gomart.

Charles Henri having learnt that Jeanne de Vaubernier lived in the Rue du Bac, he repaired to the house where she resided, and watched all the persons who entered the house until he saw one who answered to the lady's description. On the very first day he caught sight of a girl whose dazzling freshness, azure eyes, coral lips, and thick auburn hair could only belong to Jeanne. She was accompanied by a servant, who spoke with her in a light tone. They both went to the Tuileries gardens, where my grandfather followed them. He kept at a respectful distance, but his presence was nevertheless discovered. Far from appearing offended, she frequently looked at him in a more provoking than angry manner.

As I said before, Charles Henri Sanson was a handsome man, of elegant and distinguished presence, and he wore the sword and the three-cornered hat with as much grace as any nobleman. This favourable appearance was no doubt the reason of Mdlle. Jeanne's encouraging looks. Charles Henri followed her and her companion not only during their walk, but back to their house.

He repeated his performance on the following day, but he did not speak to the ladies; and this, of course, did not advance the conversion he proposed to attempt. He had just seen them disappear behind the entrance door

and was sadly pondering on the uselessness of human eloquence and the difficulty of salvation, when the curtain of a window of the first floor was slightly raised and Mdlle. Jeanne's charming head appeared behind the panes. This apparition did not disturb him, and by his looks he expressed as well as he could his desire that conversation in dumb show should soon be replaced by words. Either the young person understood or she merely wished to know the intruder's business, for, while Charles Henri Sanson's looks were still centred on the window, he felt a pull at his sleeve and beheld the servant, who made him a deep bow.

'Monsieur le Chevalier,' she said, giving him the vague title it was usual to resort to when the rank of a stranger was not known, 'my mistress, Mdlle. de Vaubernier, has remarked that for the last two days you have followed her, as if you had something to tell her; she sends me to you to ask what that may be?'

'I wish indeed to speak to your mistress, but, not knowing her, I hardly dared to accost her.'

'Mademoiselle can be seen,' answered the servant; 'she is alone, and can receive whoever she pleases. Under what name shall I announce M. le Chevalier?'

'My name is of no importance, for, as I said before, your mistress never heard it. Still, as I have no reasons to conceal it, you may announce the Chevalier de Longval.'

This qualification, which justified the soubrette's inference, appeared to her very agreeable; she disap-

peared and quickly returned saying that Mademoiselle was ready to receive Monsieur le Chevalier.

The decisive moment was now at hand. Charles Henri Sanson ascended the staircase and entered a cosy and comfortable room. Mlle. Jeanne was seated in one of those small arm-chairs called *bonheur du jour*, which were then in fashion. She smiled somewhat familiarly on my grandfather, and asked him to take a seat. 'Will you now tell me, Monsieur le Chevalier,' she then said, 'what procures me the honour of your visit?'

What she asked was precisely that which it was difficult to explain. My poor grandsire was as embarrassed as Master Jack-Jean: what he knew the least was how to begin. How could he tell the pretty sinner that he came to save her from Satan's claws? He was very young for the accomplishment of such a task, and his thoughts, while looking at Mlle. Jeanne, were somewhat mundane.

He resolved to break the ice at once, and confess himself beaten if he met with any resistance. 'Mademoiselle,' said he, with a deep sigh, 'you know, I believe, the Abbé Gomart?'

At these words the young girl rose, her face turned pale; anger appeared in her eye, and in a trembling voice, she said:

'What is this, sir? By what right do you speak of M. Gomart? Are you, then, his spy? I pity you if, at your age, you already undertake such errands, and join in persecuting a poor woman.'

'Mademoiselle,' exclaimed my grandfather, in a

piteous tone, 'can you believe this? I know the Abbé Gomart; but my visit is quite spontaneous. It is because I have often heard him speak of you as of a niece for whom he feels the tenderest affection and who is being led to perdition, that I resolved to seek you, throw myself at your feet, and conjure you not to forsake virtue, to listen to the voice of the worthy priest who speaks to you with the double authority of church and family, and whose dearest wish is for your happiness in this world, and your eternal felicity in the next!'

And, suiting the action to the word, Charles Henri Sanson knelt before Jeanne. At the outset of this harangue, and when my grandfather alluded to the love of the Abbé, she appeared moved and tears came to her eyes; but at the singular conclusion of his speech she burst out laughing, and turning to the servant who was still in the room, she said, unceremoniously, 'What a booby that fellow is!'

One can imagine Charles Henri's embarrassment and stupefaction at the poor success of his eloquence. However, he bravely swallowed the epithet, rose, dusted his knees, and, convinced that he had to deal with a person who was deaf to virtuous exhortations, he abandoned all hope of redeeming her, entered into the spirit of the scene, and even cut a joke at the expense of the Abbé.

It was now Jeanne's turn to be serious. 'Sir,' she said, 'I beg you to speak of M. Gomart with more respect. If his exhortations become ridiculous when

they are repeated by a young man, they are respectable when they come from his own lips. Remember that you are speaking of a member of my family who deserves all my respect.'

The reprimand produced an impression on Charles Henri Sanson. He felt he was not doing his duty to his venerable friend. 'I assure you, mademoiselle,' said he, 'that no one respects M. Gomart more than I do, but my first ideas when I came here were so confused that I hardly know what I have said or what to say. I feel disposed to laugh and to cry. I am glad to see you, so young, so gay, and so beautiful; and then I think of all that your honoured uncle says of you, and I am filled with grief.'

'I owe you many thanks,' answered the girl, in a mischievous tone, 'for the interest you take in me; but as our acquaintance is quite recent, and as my uncle has never spoken to me of a family bearing the name under which you came here, you will permit me to interrupt this edifying conversation and to put off further acquaintance to a future occasion.'

'Oh, mademoiselle!' cried my grandfather, 'do not treat me so harshly. My visit was ridiculous, I admit, but I was led by a high feeling of regard for your uncle, and an irresistible desire to know you. Need I tell you that this desire has increased since I saw you? Do not discard me; allow me to be your friend. Some day, perhaps, my devotion may be of some service to you.'

'There!' said Mdlle. Jeanne, laughing; 'I took

him for my uncle's spy; and now he insists on being mine!'

Either the prospect of knowing what her family thought of her took her fancy, or my grandfather's candour and good faith touched her heart, for she allowed him to see her again, and got to like the admirer who had paid his addresses in so singular a fashion.

Charles Henri Sanson from that time paid frequent visits to Jeanne de Vaubernier. If the present work had scandal for one of its objects, I might insinuate that he was the recipient of her favours; but I can only state what I know, and my grandfather never spoke of the friend of his young days, who was to become the Comtesse du Barry, otherwise than with respect and fondness. He did not deny that he loved her, and that at one time he was quite enslaved by the charms of the belle who became the mistress of an immoral old king; but he never said that his affection was returned. I cannot, therefore, represent him as the Jean-Jacques Rousseau of a royal Warens, although the contrast between such amours might appear striking enough. The same discretion has not been shown by others, for Charles Henri Sanson's connection with Madame du Barry has been commented upon and travestied in the most absurd manner by the inventors of apocryphal memoirs. They have represented my grandfather as a mysterious and fatal young man, who followed the steps of Jeanne de Vaubernier, predicting her grandeur and his own fall, and mingling with these solemn warnings a

request for favours when she should be Queen of France. They make him appear on two different occasions in a memorable year of the Countess's life, foretelling her fate in dark and ominous terms. I do not wish at present to speak of the awful test which was in store for Charles Henri Sanson when he was called upon to behead his former friend; but I am bound to contradict this tissue of inventions which has been reproduced in various works. The connection of Charles Henri with Jeanne de Vaubernier was such as I have related; and as to the prediction which was attributed to him, it may have sprung from the following circumstance. By a curious coincidence the favourite of Louis XV. was born at Vaucouleurs, in the little village that gave birth to Jeanne d'Arc. The lightness of Jeanne de Vaubernier's mind and manners did not prevent her from entertaining the greatest admiration for the maid of Orleans; and although Jeanne d'Arc was not ranked among the saints, she often invoked her name and called her her protectress. One day as she exclaimed, as was her wont, 'By St. Jeanne, my patroness!' my grandfather observed that she was not like her, and that should fate ever lead her before a king she would not enact the part of Jeanne d'Arc, but rather that of Agnes Sorel.

Jeanne was the daughter of a dressmaker named Becu, *alias* Cautigny, who after Jeanne's birth married one Rançon de Vaubernier, clerk of the customs, on condition that the child should be considered by him as his own. My grandfather had good reason to believe that her real

father was no other than the Abbé Gomart. He styled her his niece, because his position did not allow of his recognising her as his child. For a long time he spoke of her in terms of the strongest affection. Charles Henri Sanson was already in love with her, and he listened to the old man with eager ears; and on more than one occasion he nearly betrayed his secret. For Mdlle. Vaubernier the executioner of Paris was still the Chevalier de Longval; and he could easily maintain his incognito, considering that uncle and niece saw very little or nothing of each other, and Charles Henri was so much under the fascinating influence of the future Dubarry that he never revealed his avocations.

Jeanne was not only gifted with ideal beauty; she was supremely pleasing and graceful. It is not my intention to retrace her biography; it is quite enough for me to have to dwell on the last chapter of it. I shall not, therefore, follow her in her life of adventures and licentiousness, which culminated in her connections with a king. When she became Louis XV.'s favourite Charles Henri Sanson had long ago lost sight of her. The Abbé Gomart had ceased to speak of his daughter. She had vainly attempted to conceal from him her erratic existence. When she became a royal mistress, she remembered her father, and thought, no doubt, that he would readily make the most of her equivocal elevation. Important personages went to see Gomart, and offered him a bishopric; but it was all in vain. The old priest was

not to be allured. He declined every offer, and to the end of his life he remained in his pious retreat, which he only left to discharge his functions and to sit down once a week at the executioner's table.

CHAPTER XVII.

ADVENT OF CHARLES HENRI SANSON.

IT was in the month of January 1754 that Jean-Baptiste Sanson felt the first effects of the malady which deprived him of the use of his limbs. His eldest son, Charles Henri, then fifteen years of age, was tall and strong; and with a little assistance capable of taking his father's place. But it was the second time that the duties of executioner devolved on a minor who might be regarded as wanting in experience; and this led to a contest between us and those who wished to gain possession of the appanage of our family.

As soon as my great-grandfather's illness was known, and although, thanks to Charles Henri's assistance, there had been no interruption in the discharge of the executioner's functions, all sorts of intrigues were resorted to with the sole object of obtaining the office.

It seemed as if Marthe Dubut's life was only preserved in order to see that the inheritance of our functions should be retained in the family. She solicited them on her grandson's behalf; and when the procureur-général expressed a doubt that so young a man could

discharge the duties of executioner, she assured him that Charles Henri was older than his years. The magistrate told her to bring the young man with her on the next day. Marthe Dubut returned accompanied by my grandfather, whose vigorous constitution and precocious gravity completely satisfied the procureur. He, however, declined to invest him officially, and Charles Henri was merely authorised to take his father's place until experience should prove his capacity. This provisional office lasted four-and-twenty years, and it was only when Jean-Baptiste died in 1778 that my grandfather became executioner *en titre*.

Just as Charles Henri and his mother entered the procureur's office they met two men who had been talking with the magistrate. They retired hurriedly, and the voice of the procureur was heard saying to a police officer:

'See these fellows to their lodgings, and if they are not off in two hours, arrest them and take them to the Châtelet.'

The two men seemed embarrassed as they passed near Marthe Dubut; but the latter looked at them steadfastly, saying to her son:

'My child, these are ungrateful relatives of yours; they came here to deprive you of your father's inheritance. They have had an unfavourable reception, it seems. When you see them again after my death do not forget the ill-will they bear you.'

These two men, father and son, were, in fact, connected with us by the eternal union of executioners'

families between each other. They were provincial executioners; and, hearing of my great-grandfather's condition, they had come to Paris to secure his situation. They had been foolish enough to offer the procureur a large sum of money if he would favour them. Their attempt at corruption failed, and they retired in dudgeon, but glad to be let off so easily.

I will not quote the name of these disappointed competitors, as they were connected with my family, and out of deference to their descendants, who still bear that name. The same thing occurred to me during my seven years of service. When it was known that I had but little wish to retain an office which I hated, and which I could hand down to no son, all kinds of machinations were devised to obtain my dismissal or to make sure of my inheritance. Were not such details below the reader's notice, I could tell a curious story on the matter, on the ambition of those who wished to take charge of our grim functions. But let us leave this unpleasant subject, and return to Charles Henri Sanson, who replaced his father during four-and-twenty years before he took his official title. Marthe Dubut died shortly afterwards, proudly conscious of having educated a numerous posterity for the government of the scaffold. Her death wrought a considerable change in the habits of the house; Charles Jean-Baptiste retired to the country with his wife, and Charles Henri virtually became the head of the family. His tenure of office was far longer than that of any other of our race. We have seen him commencing his career in the monstrous tortures

inflicted on Damiens as a punishment for an attempted regicide; we shall soon find him committing a legal regicide. We have seen him executing Lally and La Barre, the victims of intrigue and fanaticism; we shall see him slaying thousands of victims during the Terror. It appears to me impossible to find in any country and under any legislation a more complete incarnation of the executioner than my grandfather, especially during the Revolution. As a minister of popular reprisals, as the instrument of revenge which had accumulated during ages against the excesses of monarchy, he became the principal member of the State. Royalty, the Gironde, the Montagne successively perished by his hands.

The latter part of the reign of Louis XV. was not bloody; Lally and La Barre were the last victims of State and religion; and the Court did not blend cruelty with vice: I only find in my grandfather's notes the names of common criminals of La Tournelle. The only circumstance worthy of notice regarding these cases was, that all these criminals appealed to Parliament against sentences passed by inferior jurisdictions, and that these appeals usually led to the infliction of severer penalties. Seldom did inferior courts inflict the punishment of the wheel; the gibbet was the instrument of death they generally resorted to. Now when the Parliament quashed their decisions it was only to substitute the wheel for the gibbet. In a list of obscure crimes I find a case which is worth mentioning. A horse-dealer, named Chabert, had an only son, who was to take his

father's business after his death. The young man, however, was a debauchee; and not only did he spend his time in idleness or pleasure, but he impatiently waited for the time when by his father's death he would take possession of a small fortune. Amongst his ordinary boon companions was one Cellier, who became his confidant and accomplice in the horrible design young Chabert was meditating. Cellier was perverse and weak, and he was easily persuaded by Chabert to murder the father of the latter. They fixed the day and hour. Chabert gave Cellier a long knife which he had sharpened himself; and as Chabert the elder was returning home between eight and nine o'clock at night, Cellier struck him twice with this weapon. A struggle took place between the murderer and his victim; the son came to the assistance of his accomplice, and both managed to escape. As to Chabert the elder, he fell and died on the spot.

This audacious crime had been committed near the Palais de Justice. The judges of the *Bailliage* took immediate steps for the capture of the assassins. Chabert and Cellier were easily discovered and arrested, and on December 12, 1774, they were both sentenced to die on the wheel. The Parliament confirmed the sentence on the same day, and handed over the culprits to the criminal lieutenant for its immediate execution.

The rapidity with which the whole affair was brought to a culmination shows how abhorred by public conscience were such crimes as Chabert's. Parricide at the time was very rarely committed. I do not think Charles Henri Sanson had been called upon before

this to inflict certain portions of the sentences, such as the amputation of the hand and the burning of the body. Executions were less frequent than one might think during our professional experience. The punishments which my grandfather had to see to were chiefly flogging and marking, usually inflicted on thieves and forgerers. Our modern laws, in France at least, have abolished such corporal punishments. Marking and the pillory disappeared one after the other, although they were still in force in my time. Mutilation, which always preceded the execution of parricides, has fallen into disuse. Cremation of corpses and scattering the ashes to the wind nowadays would only disgrace justice. Only the scaffold, on which simple and rapid death is inflicted, remains; and—may I be allowed to say so?—I am convinced that its days are numbered.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE NECKLACE AFFAIR.

THIS affair is so well known that to give a detailed account of it is, I think, useless. I will therefore limit myself to a brief summary of the facts which caused the arrest of the Cardinal de Rohan, M. de Cagliostro, M. Retaux de Villette, and Mdlle. Oliva, and brought Madame Jeanne de Valois in contact with the executioner.

One day Madame de Boulainvilliers, wife of the Provost of Paris, met in a village in Burgundy a little girl, who held out her hand, saying: 'My beautiful lady, for the love of God, give something to the descendant of the former Kings of France.'

These words surprised Mdme. de Boulainvilliers; she asked the child to explain her singular way of begging. The curate of the village, who was passing by, told madame that the child said the truth, and that she was the lineal descendant of Henri de Saint-Rémy, bastard of Henry II. and of Nicole de Savigny.

Madame de Boulainvilliers also heard that the child was an orphan, and that she lived on public charity. She took her to Paris; her genealogy was examined,

and it was discovered that the little Jeanne de Valois, her brother, and her sister were really scions of the old royal stock. A petition was presented to the Queen and to M. de Maurepas by the Duke de Brancas-Cériste. Pensions were granted to the three children. The boy entered the navy; he became a lieutenant, and died under the name of Baron de Saint-Rémy de Valois.

In 1780 Jeanne de Valois married a member of Monsieur's private guard, Comte de la Motte. This officer was poor; his wife's portion consisted of a small pension; and this was insufficient for the ambition of La Motte and his wife. Madame de la Motte was considered to be a very beautiful woman; she was witty and attractive, and expressed herself with elegance and facility. She became acquainted with the Cardinal de Rohan, who lent her money and protected her. It is difficult to say whether the prelate's generosity was quite disinterested; but there is reason to believe that it was not, especially as he lent Madame de la Motte, without any plausible reason, a sum amounting to one hundred and twenty thousand livres, previous to the necklace affair. Howbeit Madame de la Motte enjoyed the intimacy of the fastidious prelate, and discovered his secret aspirations. She found out that his desire was to have over the Queen, who, it was said, exercised a sovereign domination over her husband, the same influence as Cardinal Mazarin had had with Anne d'Autriche. She flattered his hobby, and used it as the basis of her future fortunes.

The almost stupid simplicity through which M. de

Rohan fell a victim to the snare of this wily woman will afford an idea of the prelate's intellectual calibre. Mdme. de la Motte persuaded the Cardinal that she was on terms of intimacy with the Queen; that, conscious as she was of the Cardinal's eminent qualities, she had so often spoken of him to her Majesty that the Cardinal was on his way to favour; that Marie Antoinette authorised him to send her the justification of his supposed blunders during his embassy in Austria; that she further wished to have with M. de Rohan a correspondence which was to remain secret until she could openly manifest her preference for him; that Madame de la Motte was to be the bearer of this correspondence, the result of which must infallibly lead the Cardinal to the highest favour and influence.

Was Madame de la Motte at all connected with the Queen? Most historians deny the fact. Anyhow her invention was successful. The Cardinal believed her and was quite enthusiastic; he richly rewarded her for the forged letters which she gave him as coming from the Queen; and Madame de la Motte was doubtless encouraged by his simplicity.

A magnificent necklace had been ordered by Louis XV. of MM. Boemer and Bossange, the crown jewellers. It was made for Madame du Barry. The King died before it was finished; his favourite mistress was exiled by the new monarch, and the beautiful jewel remained in the hands of the makers. They offered it to the Queen; but the price, which amounted to 1,800,000 livres, was thought too high. Madame de la Motte saw the necklace. The jewellers told her they were much

embarrassed by the Queen's refusal to purchase it; they were impeded in their trade by such a considerable outlay of money, and they offered to make a rich present to whoever could find a buyer. The Countess thought that the Queen would be only too glad to get the necklace if she had not to pay for it; and she inferred that Marie Antoinette could not but feel very grateful to the person who would get it for her. Her husband, M. de la Motte, entered into the plot. They obtained the support of the Comte de Cagliostro, who exercised a powerful influence over M. de Rohan; and at length Madame de la Motte persuaded the Cardinal that the Queen wished to purchase the necklace with her own money; that, as a token of good feeling towards the Cardinal, she requested him to buy the jewel in her name; and that she would send him a receipt written and signed with her own hand. This document was handed to M. de Rohan by Madame de la Motte; it was dated from Trianon, and signed 'Marie Antoinette de France.' How the Cardinal could fail to discover the forgery when he saw this signature, it is difficult to say. The Queen, like all the princesses who had preceded her on the throne, signed her Christian name only, and the words 'de France,' due to the imagination of the forger (Retaux de Villette) were a sufficient indication of the origin of the document.

But he had no suspicion; and really believing that he was acting in accordance with the wishes of his sovereign, and thinking that the highest favour would be accorded to him for his intervention, he sent for the jewellers, and

showed them the Queen's receipt. They accepted the arrangements he proposed, and on February 1 the casket was handed to Madame de la Motte at Versailles; and it was remitted by her, in the Cardinal's presence, to a so-called valet-de-chambre of the royal household, who was no other than the forger, Retaux de Villette. This bold fraud was brought to a conclusion by the departure for England of M. de la Motte with the rich booty.

After thus gaining possession of the necklace, Madame de la Motte was not satisfied; she hoped to compromise the Queen and the Cardinal still more. She therefore set to work again. Retaux de Villette wrote other letters, by which the Queen informed M. de Rohan that, being unable to give him public marks of her esteem, she wished to see him between eleven and midnight in the shrubs of Versailles. Madame de la Motte had met a girl of the name of Oliva, whose resemblance to Marie Antoinette had struck her, and who acted the part of the Queen. The meeting took place in the Baths of Apollo. Mdlle. Oliva's performance was admirable; she gave a rose to the Cardinal, who was choking with emotion, and then sent him away in a state of high exultation.

But the date fixed for the payment of the first instalment of the price of the necklace was drawing near, and the jewellers were somewhat uneasy. They tried to ascertain whether the necklace was in the Queen's possession; but they could not obtain an audience, and they soon discovered that they were the victims of a robbery. In their indignation they made known the

whole affair; and it was reported to M. de Breteuil, minister of the King's household. M. de Breteuil was the Cardinal's personal enemy, and he eagerly seized the opportunity of manifesting his dislike. He had a secret conversation with the Queen; informed her of the rumours that were being circulated concerning herself, the Cardinal, and Madame de la Motte; and besought her to tell him if she had any reason to fear a public investigation.

The Queen answered that she had no apprehension whatever, and that the sooner the mystery was explained the better. On August 15 the Cardinal, as great almoner, was to officiate in the chapel. He was about to assume his religious robes when an usher came to inform him that the King wished to speak to him.

Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, and M. de Breteuil were together when the Cardinal appeared in the royal presence. The King spoke to him in a strongly irritated tone:

'Sir, you have, I believe, bought diamonds at Boemer's?'

'I have, your Majesty,' answered De Rohan.

'Where are they?'

M. de Rohan hesitated. 'I thought, Sire,' said he, at length, 'that these diamonds were in the possession of the Queen.'

'Who directed you to send them to the Queen?'

'A lady named Madame la Comtesse de la Motte Valois. She gave me a letter from the Queen, whose orders I thought I obeyed by purchasing the diamonds.'

The Queen here interrupted him. 'How could you believe, sir,' she exclaimed, 'that after looking upon you with disfavour for more than eight years I could select you for such a piece of business, and through the intervention of such a woman?'

'I now perceive,' answered the Cardinal, 'that I have been cruelly deceived. My wish to please your Majesty led me astray. I will pay for the necklace . . . . I am the victim of a fraud of which before this I had no suspicion. I am extremely sorry.'

He produced his pocket-book, and selected the Queen's receipt. The King looked at it: 'Why,' he said, 'this is neither the Queen's handwriting nor her signature. How could you, a prince of the house of Rohan, and the great almoner of France, believe that the Queen signed "Marie Antoinette de France?" Everybody knows that queens only sign their Christian names.'

The Cardinal was getting more and more disconcerted. He was obliged to lean against a table. The King saw this, and told him to go into an adjoining room, where he could write his justification. M. de Rohan obeyed, and reappeared a quarter of an hour after, with a paper which he handed to Louis. At the door he found M. de Jouffroy, lieutenant of the guards, who arrested him, and handed him over to M. d'Agoult, who took him to the Bastille.

Madame de la Motte was arrested on the following day. She denied having in any way participated in the theft of the necklace, and she charged M. de Cagliostro with the crime, alleging that he persuaded the Cardinal to buy

the necklace. Cagliostro and his wife were arrested. Madame de la Motte hoped, no doubt, to escape by insinuating that the Cardinal as well as Cagliostro was responsible for the necklace; but, unfortunately for her, Mademoiselle Oliva was arrested in Brussels, and her revelations threw some light on the mystery. Some time after, Retaux de Villette was taken, and he was confronted with M. de la Motte. In the night of the 29th all the accused were transferred from the Bastille to the Conciergerie, and on September 5 letters patent of the King sent the case before the Parliament.

These letters were couched in strong and bitter terms, and brought against the Cardinal a terrible charge. The affair, which was now publicly known, produced deep sensation. The nobility and the clergy were equally interested in the issue of the trial, the two principal parties being the Queen and a prince of the Church. The trial was commenced on December 22. Madame de la Motte, who was dressed with great care and elegance, was brought in; her face was undisturbed, and she answered all the questions put to her by the president with the utmost coolness and presence of mind. The Cardinal appeared after her. The members of the bench showed him much regard, and it was easy to perceive that, perhaps through a spirit of opposition to the Court of Versailles, they were favourable to him.

On December 29 the procureur-général read out his conclusions; they were extremely hostile to the Cardinal. The procureur demanded such humiliating admissions as M. de Rohan could not have made, and which must

have left him in prison for the remainder of his life. These conclusions met with strong disapprobation on the part of the bench. Sentence was pronounced on the 31st. The court condemned La Motte, *in contumaciam*, to hard labour for life; Jeanne de Saint-Rémy Valois, wife of La Motte, to amende honorable, and afterwards to be whipped, and marked on both shoulders with the letter V, and also to imprisonment for life; Retaux de Villette to banishment for life. Mademoiselle Oliva was acquitted; so was M. de Cagliostro. As to the Cardinal, he was cleared of all charges. This judgment was received with a kind of enthusiasm. Public opinion considered it, in some sort, as a victory. The judges were cheered, writes De Besenval, and so warmly received by the people that they made their way through the crowd with difficulty.

Madame de la Motte had been left in ignorance of the penalties pronounced against her. As the holidays of the Parliament began on the day of judgment, the execution of the sentence was deferred. It was only six months later that it was communicated to the accused. On June 21 M. de Fleury, the procureur, sent for the executioner and informed him that Madame de la Motte had shown great violence of temper during her incarceration, and that it was to be feared that she would resist. He requested him to arrange the execution of the sentence so as to avoid scandal. A magistrate, who was present, suggested that Madame de la Motte should be gagged, like M. de Lally; but Charles Henri Sanson objected, reminding him that the compassion which had been evinced for the old general would be more widely felt and ex-

pressed if a woman were subjected to the same violence. It was eventually decided that the execution should take place in the court of the Conciergerie. Charles Henri Sanson asked the procureur to entrust to him the management of this unpleasant affair, in which judgment was far more necessary than strength.

He began by obtaining information concerning Madame de la Motte's habits, and he heard from the gaoler that she was on very friendly terms with his wife, who attended her in the prison. Following the instructions of the executioner, this woman entered the prisoner's room, and told her that she was wanted outside. Madame de la Motte was in bed; she turned her face towards the wall, and said that she was sleepy and could not rise so early. The gaoler's wife then told her that it was her counsel who wished to speak with her. This effectually roused Madame de la Motte, who jumped out of bed, and lost no time in dressing. As she was leaving the room, one of my grandfather's assistants, who was behind the door, seized her arm and thrust it under his; another assistant did the same on the other side; but Madame de la Motte, displaying such strength as could hardly have been expected from a woman, shook away their grasp and retreated towards the door. Charles Henri, however, had come forward and was standing against it. Madame de la Motte stopped, and looked at him with glistening eyes. 'She was,' writes my grandfather, 'rather small in stature, but extremely well made. Her countenance was sufficiently pleasant to conceal for a time the irregularity of her features;

her expressive physiognomy was full of charm, and it was only after minute examination that one discovered that her nose was very sharp, that her expressive mouth was large, and that her eyes were somewhat small. What was remarkable in her was the thickness and length of her hair, and also the whiteness of her skin, and the smallness of her hands and feet. She wore a silk *déshabillé*, striped brown and white, and covered with small nosegays of roses. Her head-dress was an embroidered cap.' While she was eyeing Charles Henri as if about to leap at him, the other assistants and four police officers surrounded her. She perceived that resistance was useless, and, speaking to my grandfather, who had taken off his hat: 'What do you want with me?' she said.

'We wish you to listen to your judgment, madame,' answered the executioner.

Madame de la Motte shuddered; she clenched her hands, looked down, and then raising her head: 'Very well,' she said. The two assistants, who had at first tried to secure her, came forward; but she motioned them away, and advanced before them.

When the procession reached the hall where a parliamentary committee was sitting, the clerk read out the judgment. At the very first words which proclaimed her guilt, the strongest emotion appeared on Madame de la Motte's face. Her eyes rolled in their sockets; she bit her lips, and the hitherto pretty face now seemed to be the mask of a fury. Charles Henri foresaw a storm and approached her: and it was well that he did so, for as the clerk came to the penalties, the unhappy woman's

rage burst out with extraordinary violence. She fell backwards so suddenly that her head must have been fractured on the stones had not my grandfather caught her in his arms. It was impossible to finish the reading of the sentence. Madame de la Motte's strength increased as the consciousness of her fate flashed through her mind; and a protracted struggle ensued between her and the assistants who attempted to pinion her. She was at length carried down to the court. The scaffold was erected opposite the gate, which had been left open. But it was six o'clock in the morning, and only a limited number of persons were looking on. She was stretched on the platform, and received twelve stripes. She never ceased shrieking while the punishment was being inflicted. She invoked vengeance on the head of Cardinal de Rohan; and she added that it was her own fault that she had suffered the disgrace which had been inflicted on her, since, had she said but one word, she would have been hanged instead of having been flogged.

The second part of the sentence had no doubt escaped her, for when she was seated on the platform she remained motionless, as if completely subdued and powerless. Charles Henri Sanson thought the moment was well chosen for the completion of the penalty. Her dress had been torn, and her shoulder was bare; he took an iron from the grate and applied it to her skin. Madame de la Motte uttered a wild shriek, and, writhing in the grasp of one of the assistants who were holding her, she bit his hand with such fury that she took a piece of flesh off. She struggled again, and it was with

the greatest difficulty that the iron could be applied to the other shoulder.

Justice was now satisfied. Madame de la Motte was put in a fly and taken to the Salpétrière. As she was alighting she tried to rush under the wheels, and a few moments afterwards she thrust the sheet of her bed into her throat in a frenzied attempt to choke herself. Her imprisonment lasted ten months. She escaped, some said, through the connivance of the Government, in fear of the revelations which M. de la Motte threatened to make unless his wife were released. Others asserted that Madame de la Motte's husband bribed a sister of charity, who assisted her in making her escape. A sentry who was under her window gave her a man's dress, by means of which she left the Salpétrière and reached England. She joined her husband in London, where she died in 1791.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE AUTO-DA-FÉ OF VERSAILLES.

IT was in 1788 that the last instance of a sentence of breaking on thewheel occurred. The following were the circumstances :

In the Rue de Satory at Versailles lived an elderly smith of the name of Mathurin Louschart. This man was the type of artisans of former days : he was full of prejudices and antipathies, and a lover of tradition. Fully persuaded of the superiority of his profession over any other, he would not have exchanged his leather apron for a magistrate's robes or an abbé's cassock. He abhorred new ideas ; the Montmorencies, the Rohans of the time had not the supreme contempt which he professed for equality, saying that even if a donkey's ears were ever so much shortened, it was impossible to make a horse of it. However, excepting his eccentric ways and odd ideas, Mathurin Louschart, or rather Master Mathurin, as he was called in the neighbourhood, was a good man, who was always true to his word, was scrupulously honest, and often showed much kindness and charity to his poorer brethren. He had a son named Jean, a fine and handsome young man, whom he loved dearly. It was difficult to say of which Master Mathurin was prouder

—his superior capacity as a smith, or of his child. He sent him to school and gave him the best education money could procure. But while he was glad to see his son brought up as a gentleman, he was so enamoured with his own calling that he prevailed on Jean to adopt it.

The young man yielded to his father's wishes with some regret; but, although he attended to his professional duties with tolerable industry, he nevertheless went on reading; and he took more interest in Jean-Jacques Rousseau than in shoeing horses. The father did not oppose this, although the difference of education and ideas which existed between them became a cause of serious quarrel between father and son. Revolution was brewing, and Jean Louschart supported the new ideas which filled the masses with extreme enthusiasm. Jean had the greatest respect for Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Diderot, while Master Mathurin regarded them as creatures of hell. One day at dinner the young man, carried away by his enthusiasm, extolled the merits of these philosophers. Master Mathurin, who hitherto had never suspected that his son was a free-thinker, was at first astounded at his audacity; but his stupefaction was soon succeeded by anger. A dispute followed, and Jean was peremptorily ordered to hold his tongue. The young man who, although respectful, was passionate and headstrong, disobeyed the injunction, and retorted that his father had a novel way of settling a discussion. This of course did not mend matters; and at length Master Mathurin showed his son the door. It was in vain that Jean expressed his regret and readiness

to apologise; the old smith would listen to no excuse, and turned him out.

Shortly before this a widow slightly related to Master Mathurin had come to live in his house together with her daughter. Madame Verdier—such was the new-comer's name—had taken a dislike to Jean; and, although the young man felt no great affection for her, he was smitten by the charms of Helen Verdier, her daughter, and his affection was returned. No doubt father and son might have made it up, and Jean was anxious for a reconciliation—for more reasons than one; but Madame Verdier interfered and incited Master Mathurin to discard Jean for ever. She even went further; her influence with him was so great that she persuaded him to become Jean's rival by suing for Helen's hand. The poor girl was ordered by her mother to forget Jean and prepare to marry Master Mathurin.

Jean had easily found work in Versailles; he was employed by a man who afterwards became a notorious member of the Convention, Lecointre. He took his master's advice; and, as it was evident that Mathurin wished to marry out of spite against his son, the latter determined to elope with his sweetheart. Jean punctually repaired to his father's house on the night appointed for his flight with Helen; he waited outside for some time, but Helen did not appear. He was getting uneasy when from the house issued shrieks which he immediately recognised as Helen's. He broke the door open without a moment of hesitation, and beheld Madame Verdier, who, having, no doubt, discovered the projected

elopement, was unmercifully beating her daughter, while Master Mathurin was grimly looking on.

The sight was too much for Jean ; he rushed forward to protect his sweetheart; but his father stopped him, and, with the utmost violence, upbraided him for what he styled his infamous conduct. Madame Verdier now came forward also, and goaded the old smith to such a climax of fury that he spat in his son's face. Jean had suffered in silence ; but this last insult was too much for his temper, and he retorted with words of extreme bitterness. At this Mathurin's rage knew no bounds ; he seized a crowbar and aimed a terrific blow at Jean. The passage in which this scene was taking place was so narrow that the bar struck against the wall as it came down, and Jean was able to leap aside. Helen, who was gazing with terror at the awful contest, cried to Jean to fly. The young man followed her advice, and made for the door while his father was raising his crowbar for the second time ; but the woman Verdier had anticipated him and was resolutely standing against it. Mathurin struck a second blow, and again missed his aim. As he was raising the crowbar for the third time, Jean rushed past him, and tried to enter the workshop, whence he intended to jump through the window into the street ; but the door of the workshop was also locked, and his father was giving chase ; as he tried to break it open, a heavy mass of iron whizzed just above his head, and struck one of the panels, which it shattered to pieces. Old Louschart had laid down his crowbar, and had hurled his heavy hammer. He now came up and grappled with

Jean, who now felt that he could only save his life by mastering him. He seized his father's arm, as it was poising the hammer over his head for the fourth time, and tried to wrench the weapon from his grasp. The old man, however, was yet possessed of great physical strength; but his son was young and muscular, and he succeeded in overthrowing him. He disarmed him, tore himself away from his grasp, rose to his feet, and took to flight. As he was crossing the threshold, hardly knowing what he was about, he threw behind him the heavy hammer, and rushed out. So rapid was his flight that he did not hear a cry in the workshop after he had flung back the hammer. Master Mathurin had just risen from the ground; the heavy mass of iron struck him above the right eyebrow and fractured his skull.

Madame Verdier came to the old smith's assistance; but he was quite dead. The neighbours, roused by Helen's cries, entered the house. They were told by Madame Verdier that Jean had murdered his father. Mathurin was liked, in spite of his defects; and great indignation prevailed. The news soon spread throughout Versailles, and was a subject of general conversation from the palace to the workshop. The crime of parricide occurred so rarely that the death of Mathurin excited deep emotion; and the King himself ordered M. de Lamoignon to proceed against the culprit without a moment's delay.

Madame Verdier's evidence was taken; she swore that she had seen Jean aim the deadly blow. As to Helen, the tragic events of the night had so bewildered

her, that no importance was attached to her evidence. Jean was arrested at Sèvres, and led back to Versailles, amidst vociferous groans and hisses from the crowd. When he was taken, he expressed the most unfeigned surprise; those who took him to prison informed him of the death of his father, and of the presumptions which led the public and the judicial authorities to believe that he was the murderer. The news filled him with such grief that he at first seemed to forget that he was charged with an awful deed. When he fully understood that he was taken for the assassin of the man whose death he so deeply lamented, he vehemently protested. He was taken to his father's house, and when he saw the old man's corpse, he rushed forward and passionately kissed the pale face. Madame Verdier's evidence was, however, so precise that the magistrate who accompanied him took his grief for a display of sheer hypocrisy. He questioned Jean, and as the latter was asserting that he had merely protected himself, and had not raised a finger against the old smith, the magistrate pointed to the wound and then to the hammer. Jean seemed suddenly to remember that he had thrown the hammer back into the house as he was running away. He understood what had taken place, but saw that it would be impossible for him to convince his judges of his innocence. He stated the truth to the magistrates, adding that he would not defend himself, and that as he had, although unwittingly, caused the death of the man from whom he had received life, he would suffer without a murmur.

The trial took place at the Châtelet. But, mean-

while, public feeling had greatly altered as the facts of the case transpired. Jean had many friends too, and they strived to show not only that he was not guilty, but that he had been the patient victim of the whims and acrimonious temper of old Mathurin. They succeeded so well that public sympathy, in Versailles, was thoroughly aroused in the prisoner's interest, and Jean's trial assumed the importance of a political affair. As he had announced, Jean did not defend himself; he would not even discuss or contradict Madame Verdier's evidence; and the court sentenced him to die on the wheel. The prisoner, however, was not condemned to amende honorable, which included the amputation of the hand; and the judges added a *retentum* to their sentence by which Jean Louschart was to be secretly strangled before his limbs were crushed.

Now public opinion, in Versailles, had already settled that Jean was innocent, and the news of his forthcoming execution caused general excitement. The execution was appointed to take place on August 3. On the morning of the 2nd, Charles Henri Sanson sent from Paris two carts containing the instruments of torture, and beams and boards for the erection of the scaffold. He himself went to Versailles in the afternoon. The emotion caused by Jean Louschart's impending fate was limited to Versailles; and my grandfather was so thoroughly convinced that he had to deal with a vulgar criminal that he was greatly surprised when he found the whole town in a fever. The Place Saint-Louis was covered with so great a multitude that the assistants and

carpenters could hardly go on with their work. No hostility was manifested, however; the crowd was noisy, but its mood was gay; the name of Jean was scarcely pronounced; and the workmen who were erecting the platform were merely jeered. One of the carpenters having, however, struck an urchin who was throwing stones at him, cries of 'Death!' were uttered; in an instant all the mocking faces became dark and threatening; the assistants and carpenters were attacked, and their lives were in great danger. But a body of a hundred men, who could easily be identified as smiths by their athletic proportions and brawny faces, interfered, and partly by strength, partly by persuasion, they induced the crowd to retreat.

My grandfather had not bestowed much attention on this popular demonstration, but he became more attentive when the interference of the smiths took place. He felt convinced that the crowd was obeying a by-word, and that if it had retreated it was merely because it preferred to wait for a more favourable time for action. He directed his assistants to finish the erection of the scaffold as quickly as possible, and returned to Paris, where he lost no time in acquainting the proper authorities with his apprehensions.

Political emotion had already given rise to many storms in the provinces. Normandy, Bretagne, Béarn had risen on behalf of their parliaments, attacked in their privileges. Dauphiné had taken a decisive step; after a long series of riots, the representatives of the three orders, nobility, clergy, and *tiers-état*, had assembled,

and proclaimed their provincial independence. Paris, however, had heard with indifference of the arrest of two members of the Parliament d'Esprémenil and Monsabert; and the authorities had no idea that a struggle between the Government and the people could take place in the very town inhabited by the King and his Court, so that only a few soldiers were sent to Versailles.

The multitude which had thronged the Place Saint-Louis retired during the night; only a few young men remaining to watch what took place around the scaffold. It was rumoured that Helen Verdier had thrown herself at the Queen's feet, imploring the reprieve of the culprit, and that Marie Antoinette had prevailed on the King to grant it. The news had doubtless led to the dispersion of the crowd.

Charles Henri Sanson made the most of the circumstance. He caused a strong paling to be erected around the scaffold; and, on their side, the executive magistrates took upon themselves to advance the hour of execution.

It was two o'clock in the morning when my grandfather left the Place Saint-Louis for the prison, and he remarked that the men who were still in the place dispersed in different directions as he went away. Jean Louschart was stretched on his pallet when he entered his cell. The doomed man rose and calmly surveyed him. The clerk of the parliament read aloud the sentence, to which he listened with much attention. He then murmured a few words, among which only those

of 'Poor father!' were heard, and he added in a loud voice:

'In two hours I shall justify myself before him.'

On being told that it was time to depart for the scaffold, he turned to the executioner, saying, 'You can be in no greater hurry than I am, sir.'

At half-past four o'clock the cart moved in the direction of the Place Saint-Louis. The executive magistrates were in hopes that, owing to the *retentum*, everything could be finished before the population awoke. But they soon perceived their mistake. The streets were swarming with people. The whole of the population was astir. Deafening clamours burst from the crowd as the cart appeared, and it was with the greatest difficulty that it made its way. The prisoner did not even seem to suspect that all this movement was caused by the sympathy people felt for him. At the corner of the Rue de Satory a piercing cry was heard, and a girl was seen waving her handkerchief. Jean Louschart looked up, and rising to his feet, he tried to smile, and exclaimed, 'Farewell, Helen, farewell!' At that moment a smith of high stature and herculean proportions, who was walking near the cart, cried in a thundering voice:

'It is *au revoir* you should say, Jean. Are good fellows like you to be broken on the wheel?'

A horseman drove him back, but applause and cheers came from every quarter. It was obvious, by the pale faces of the clerk, the policemen, and the soldiers who surrounded the cart, that the agents of the law were anything but confident. The scaffold, however, was reached

without accident. The crowd was thickly packed on the Place Saint-Louis. As the cart stopped Jean Louschart addressed a question to the priest who was sitting near him, and my grandfather heard the latter answer, 'To save you.' 'No, father,' said the doomed man in a feverish voice and with some impatience; 'if I am innocent of the intention of committing the crime, my hands are nevertheless stained with blood. I must die, and I wish to die.—Be quick, sir,' he added, turning to my grandfather.

'Sir,' answered Charles Henri, pointing to the infuriated masses that were already breaking through the paling, 'if there is a man here who is in danger of death it is not you.'

Hardly were the words out of his mouth than a tempest of groans and screams burst forth. The paling was broken and trodden under foot, and hundreds of men rushed on the scaffold. The smith who had already spoken to Louschart was among the foremost. He seized the prisoner in his muscular arms, cut his bonds, and prepared to carry him off in triumph. An extraordinary scene now took place; Jean Louschart struggled violently against his saviours, turned towards the executioner and begged for death with the earnestness usually displayed by other culprits in asking for mercy. But his friends surrounded him, and at length succeeded in carrying him away.

My grandfather's position was perilous in the extreme. Separated from his assistants, alone amidst a crowd that knew him but too well, he really thought that

his last hour was at hand. His countenance probably betrayed his thoughts, for the tall smith came up to him, and seized his arm: 'Fear nothing, Charlot,[1]' he cried; 'we don't want to harm you, but your tools. Henceforth, Charlot, you must kill your customers without making them suffer.' And speaking to the crowd: 'Let him pass, and take care he is not hurt.'

This harangue calmed the crowd, and my grandfather was allowed to withdraw. In less time than it takes to write this account the scaffold and all its accessories were broken into pieces, which were thrown on the pile prepared for the burning of the prisoner's body; and the terrible wheel was placed on the summit as a kind of crown. Fire was set to the heap, and men and women, holding each other by the hand, formed an immense ring and danced around the crackling pile until it was reduced to ashes.

[1] This name, popularly given to Charles Henri Sanson, has been retained and is still familiarly given to the executioner.

CHAPTER XX.

MARIE ANNE JUGIER, MY GRANDMOTHER.

IN the preceding chapter I have shown the last appearance of the wheel as an instrument of death. The origin of this punishment is not certain; but it is generally believed that the fable of Ixion suggested it; and there can be no doubt that if, later, it was so conspicuous among the penalties of Christian societies, it was because it was a substitute for crucifixion, which could not have been retained without fear of committing sacrilege.

I have already given instances of the singular liking shown by parliaments for this punishment. It is easy to imagine how often it was resorted to when it is remembered that the old criminal legislation of France inflicted it in *one hundred and fifteen kinds of crimes*. Francis I. and his minister Cardinal Duprat were responsible for this excess of barbarity. An edict issued under the reign of Francis made of the wheel the special punishment of highwaymen and burglars, the gibbet being reserved for murderers. Human life, at the time, was, it appeared, less sacred than property, since attempts on the former were less severely punished than raids

on the latter. This anomaly could not long continue; under subsequent reigns, thieves, assassins, parricides were broken on the wheel with additional or mitigated inflictions, according to the nature of the crime. The gibbet became a secondary punishment, and almost fell into disuse in comparison with its flourishing period under the superintendence of our famous predecessor Tristan l'Hermite.

From 1770 to 1780 I find in my grandfather's notes that culprits broken on the wheel were far more numerous than those who perished by the noose. In 1769, on January 18, Etienne Charles and François Legros, sentenced for murder; on the 21st, André-Étienne Petit, for common theft; on April 27, François Boussin, for theft and murder; on August 22, Jean Brouage, for stealing linen; on September 22, Jean Lemoine, for murder; in 1771, on August 19, François Alain, for murder; in 1772, on January 16, Louis François Daux, for murder; on the 29th, François Abraham Lecerf, for theft; on August 4, Joseph Savel, for theft; on December 7, Marie Picard, her son Pierre, aged seventeen, and a man named Nicolas Rose, for robbing and murdering one Michel Moré; in 1775, on January 14, Edme Brochart, for theft and murder; on May 16, Charlotte Beuton, for murder; on September 27, Paul Darel, for theft; in 1777, on July 11, J. B. Campagnard, for murder; in 1778, on July 21, Jacques Neuiller, for theft; on September 2, Mathurin Barsagoult, for the same crime.

I have only quoted a few examples; otherwise I

could fill half a volume with the names of culprits who were broken. The wheel always excited the disgust of the public at large, and all the petitions of the deputies to the States-General in 1789 asked for its abolition.

Before entering into the period of the Revolution, I may be allowed to say a few words respecting my grandmother, and her management of our house. The death of Marthe Dubut and the departure of Jean-Baptiste Sanson had brought into it an atmosphere of loneliness. Charles Henri Sanson soon felt this and thought of marrying. He had retained certain elegant habits and was passionately fond of shooting; and his frequent absence from home, and his consequent inability to see to the management of his household affairs, made him especially eager to find a wife as soon as possible.

The environs of Montmartre were then cultivated by market gardeners. Charles Sanson often traversed these parts in his excursions. He became acquainted with one of the gardeners, who had a numerous family. His eldest daughter, Marie Anne Jugier, was, in every respect, an excellent person. My grandfather had often admired her, and he sued for her hand, although she was thirty-two years of age—six years older than himself. His suit was accepted, and on January 20, 1765, the wedding took place in the church of Saint-Pierre Montmartre.

Although my grandmother was, as I have just observed, older than my grandfather by six years, she survived him more than twelve years. I knew her

well, and it is to her that I was indebted for many details which enabled me to complete her husband's notes on a memorable period of French history.

Charles Henri Sanson had every reason to be satisfied with the choice he had made. His excellent wife managed his household with great skill and judgment, and won every heart by her gentle disposition and kindly manner. Hardly a year had elapsed since her marriage when Jean-Baptiste Sanson returned, on the occasion of the execution of Lally Tollendal. Some time afterwards the old man lost his wife, Madeleine Tronson ; he left his farm of Brie-Comte-Robert and came back to the old house in Paris. He lingered for several years, and during the course of his gradual decline Marie Anne Jugier constantly attended him. Her devotion to the patient was unceasing. Jean-Baptiste expired in August 1778, and it was his daughter-in-law who closed his eyes. My grandfather was superintending an execution on the Place du Châtelet at the moment of the old man's death. He only heard of the sad news on his return.

The Abbé Gomart opened Jean-Baptiste's will. The deceased expressed a wish to be buried with his father in the Saint-Laurent church. An old sexton showed me when I was a boy the stones which cover the graves of my two ancestors. Jean-Baptiste's property was equally divided between his sons, who, as it has been said before, were very numerous. Charles Henri Sanson was therefore compelled to sell the mansion of the Faubourg Poissonnière, and the money was shared between the heirs. My grandfather bought a house in

the Rue Neuve Saint-Jean (now the Rue du Château d'Eau), and settled there with his family. His fortune was, of course, considerably smaller than his father's, but he nevertheless lived comfortably enough on his income and private means from 1778 to 1789.

THE SAFE-CONDUCT.

Before they met on the scaffold, my grandfather was twice in presence of Louis XVI. These two meetings occurred at the beginning of the year 1789. The impoverished state of the funds had for a considerable time prevented the payment of the sums due to Charles Henri Sanson; and as he had hitherto lived in somewhat expensive style, he found himself in serious pecuniary difficulties. In a petition which he sent to the King, he explained his embarrassed position, and he was summoned to Versailles a few days afterwards. Louis received him in his private apartments. The interview was short, but my grandfather remembered every detail of it. The King was standing near a window which opened on the park. Charles Henri, intimidated by the prestige of royalty, dared advance no further than the threshold, so that the few words they spoke were exchanged at some distance. Louis wore a lilac coat embroidered with gold, short breeches and pumps; the blue and red ribbons of the order of Saint-Louis hung across his white satin waistcoat. A lace collar and frill was partly covered by a loose cravat, which showed the prominent muscles of the neck. The King was of strong

but common build. His hair was powdered and curled, and was tied with a ribbon at the back of the neck.

'You have sent in a claim for the sums that are due to you,' said he, without turning round or looking at my grandfather. 'I have ordered that your accounts be examined and settled without delay; but the State is poor for the present, and your claim is for 136,000 livres, I believe?'

'I thank your Majesty with as much gratitude as respect,' answered Charles Henri Sanson; 'but I beseech your Majesty to remember that my debts have so considerably increased that my creditors will not wait any longer, and that they threaten my liberty.'

At these words the King turned round and cast a rapid glance at my grandfather. 'Wait a moment,' said he; 'I must see to this directly.'

He rang a bell which was within his reach. An officer appeared.

'Monsieur de Villedeuil,' said the King, 'fetch me a safe-conduct, and direct it to the names I will tell you.'

The paper was procured, and the King, who had an excellent memory, dictated the names of my grandfather which he had seen on the petition. This curious safe-conduct, which I still possess, is couched in the following terms:

'*By order of the King.*

'His Majesty, being desirous of giving M. Charles Henri Sanson the means of attending to his occupations,

has given him a safe-conduct for a space of three months, during which his Majesty orders his creditors to take no proceedings against him ; to all solicitors, police officers, or others not to arrest or molest him in any way ; to all gaolers of prisons not to receive him ; and if, in spite of the said prohibition, he be imprisoned, his Majesty orders that he be immediately set free. His Majesty also orders that the present safe-conduct be only available after it has been registered at the office of the Gardes du Commerce.

'Delivered at Versailles on the nineteenth of April, seventeen hundred and eighty-nine.

'LOUIS.

'*Laurent de Villedeuil.*'

The King signed the document and handed it to my grandfather, who took it and respectfully bent his knee. His liberty was protected by the man whose life he was soon to take.

As he retired, the Queen and Madame Elisabeth were announced, and swept past him. He was thus in presence on the same day of the three royal persons who subsequently fell under his knife.

CHAPTER XXI.

ACTION AGAINST THE PRESS.

TOWARDS the end of the same year (1789) the question of penal reform was raised in the great National Assembly. In the month of October Doctor Guillotin, deputy of the *tiers-état* of Paris, presented a law by which capital punishment was to be inflicted in a uniform manner, without distinction of classes; and this new mode of punishment was decapitation, considered as the safest and most humane. This motion, which at first was adjourned, was presented again by Doctor Guillotin, and discussed on December 1. The first part of the proposed law was adopted with enthusiasm; but it went otherwise with decapitation, of which the definite sanction was put off for two years, because of the experiments made in view of finding the best means of inflicting it. I shall refer hereafter to this search, and relate how it ended by the selection of the instrument of execution now in use.

At length the Assembly completed the grand work which it had commenced, by the declaration of the rights of man; and this was for my grandfather an opportunity for a manifestation which I cannot pass without notice.

The reader doubtless remembers his defence in the extraordinary action brought against him by the Marchioness de X—— after their supper at a country inn. This defence showed that my grandfather possessed an appreciation of his office which habit and domestic education alone could explain. Cruel tests eventually modified these ideas; but, it must be admitted, Charles Henri Sanson was convinced of the legitimacy of his functions and of the injustice of the prejudice which cast discredit upon them. He therefore sought with characteristic energy and obstinacy all that could contribute to his rehabilitation.

The great movement of 1789, which removed so many injustices, appeared to him an auspicious time for the vindication of his rights; and just as, in 1776, he had taken advantage of the action brought against him by the Marchioness to claim the privilege of hereditary nobility, as first officer of a sovereign court, in the same way, when the National Assembly appointed the privileges of the citizens who were to enjoy political rights, he lost no time in asking for himself and his colleagues the title of active citizen.

In its sitting of December 24, 1789, the National Assembly passed a decree which, as far as civic capacity was concerned, principally aimed at the religious question, for it particularly stipulated, in favour of non-Catholics, for their right of election and also admission to all civil or military offices. The last article alone was broad; it set forth that no opposition could be allowed against the eligibility of any citizen unless the motive of exclusion were mentioned in constitutional decrees.

This was a *de facto* recognition of my grandfather's pretensions, for no constitutional decree deprived him of civil rights. We shall see in another chapter that my father was not satisfied and sought a more definite recognition of his claims.

But I have yet to relate a curious affair which took place a few days after the sitting of the Assembly I have just mentioned. My grandfather had let part of his house. Among his tenants was a man of the name of Rozé, a printer, who published various writings on the questions of the time. Public excitement was running high. Rozé belonged to the moderate party, who went no further than a constitutional monarchy, gradual reforms, and a progressive movement accomplished without violence. This was enough to expose him to the attacks of the demagogues. Rozé, who was very caustic, answered these onslaughts; and a polemic ensued which attracted general attention to the reactionary printer. A general cry of anger was raised against him in the press; but, curiously enough, the papers affected to speak of my grandfather as the owner of the printing establishment, and said little of Rozé. They doubtless wished, by such unfair aspersions, to discredit the claims he had shortly before advanced before the National Assembly. I cannot do better to explain the plot, for it was nothing less, than give a few extracts from the papers of the day.

'Revolutions of Paris,' by Prudhomme. No. 22, p. 27:

'It has just been discovered that the aristocrats have private presses. And where do you think they have es-

tablished them? At Sanson's—in the executioner's house. The district delegates of the Capucins of the Chaussée d'Antin have visited the premises and found the presses working for the aristocracy. You may judge, citizens, by the connection which exists between the aristocrats and honest M. Sanson of the advantage they would derive from his talents if they were the strongest.'

The presses had not been discovered in my grandfather's house, but in an adjoining building, belonging to the premises.

'Courrier de Paris,' by M. Gorsas, citizen of Paris:

'A great deal was said concerning the executioner of Paris in the last sittings of the National Assembly. While his eligibility was being discussed, he was seeking the means of becoming eligible. He had in his house the presses used to print all the abominable libels circulated in the provinces, to incite to rebellion and murder. It was in the ugly and dark Rue Saint-Jean, in the disgusting house of the executioner, that meetings of aristocrats took place; it was from this impure source that came all the incendiary writings circulated under the seal of the National Assembly. Who were the authors of these writings? We know not; but we repeat, they were circulated under the seal of the National Assembly.

'The presses have been taken away, and the honoured executioner has been arrested; he is now in the Prison de la Force. It is said, however, that he will get out of the scrape; he has powerful friends, who will prove that his arrest was a crime, with as much

eloquence as they proved to the Assembly that he is eligible.'

The 'Spy of Paris and of the Provinces,' or 'Most Secret News of the Day,' printed by Guillaume, junior:

'The executioner was interrogated yesterday. His answers are anything but satisfactory with regard to the serious conspiracy which was being arranged in his house. It was there that were held nocturnal meetings presided over by aristocrats, who were not ashamed to associate with the man who, sooner or later, must be compelled by his profession to wreak vengeance on their heads for the misfortunes they are preparing for the nation. It was in Sanson's house that were printed all the libels intended to incite the people to rebellion. This aristocratic agent maintains that his premises being too large, he had let a part of them; the aristocratic landlord did not know his tenants. The second answer is not so good as the first. Let us not lose courage; we shall hear of something more in a few days.'

'Assemblée Nationale,' sixty-first sitting, by M. de Beaulieu:

'It was in the executioner's house that were the presses that printed the atrocious libels circulated against the Assemblée. Secret meetings were also held, it is said, in this singular place of rendezvous.

'The executioner has been arrested and taken to the Châtelet; and this is his interrogatory, such as it has been forwarded to us:

'*Question*: "But why did you thus act, especially in the present circumstances?—Because I wished to give the

money earned with the presses to the poor.—*Q.*: Your generosities could not possibly have been greatly increased through any money derivable from the sale of the prints?—I never thought of making profit out of it.—*Q.*: But you were aware that was being done in your house against the public weal?—Not knowing what my tenants were about, I think I have compromised myself in no way.—*Q.*: Why did several persons run away when you were arrested?—I suppose they were the masters of those who were working.—*Q.*: Did you know them?—No.—*Q.*: You could not let your premises without knowing the names of your tenants."'

The 'Courrier de Paris,' or the 'Publiciste Français,' a political paper, *free and impartial*, with this motto, '*Nec lædere nec adulari*,' published by Descentis and a number of literary men, at the establishment of Madame Hérissaut:

No. 77: 'We hitherto distrusted the report that the conspirators assembled in the executioner's house, but we this moment hear that M. Sanson has been arrested and taken to the Châtelet, together with thirty persons concerned in the conspiracy.'

No. 81: 'We are assured that in several provincial towns a number of aristocrats, following the example of their accomplices of Paris, have chosen the executioner's abode as the place in which to meet together. . . . It is even said that some of the executioners who thus lent their houses have been arrested, together with some of the men who conspired with them, and are being brought to Paris.'

'Revolutions of France and Brabant,' by Camille Desmoulins, pp. 306 and 307 :

'The great wits of the "green faction" have just published the prospectus of a lyric journal, in which they propose to turn into vaudevilles the decrees of the Assembly, &c. It is asserted that the journal in question is to be the amusing record of the songs sung some time ago by the aristocrats around the executioner's table. Either out of spite against the "Lanterne" and M. Guillotin, or because so many visits flattered him, M. Sanson fed his company very well.'

This last diatribe was the most dangerous of all, because it was based on a semblance of truth. It was, in fact, true that my grandfather, according to the traditional custom of our family, entertained many people at supper; but such gatherings had nothing to do with politics, and the aristocrats would not have honoured us with their presence. If Rozé had occasionally been invited, it was because he was our tenant. As to the so-called vaudevilles composed by the latter, Rozé did not write them against the Assembly, but in mockery of the violent measures which extreme parties were already proposing. Moreover Rozé was not the only man who used light poetry to turn public affairs and public men into ridicule. Doctor Guillotin's motion on the unity of capital punishments was laughed at in more than one song composed in his honour.

My grandfather could not, of course, allow such direct attacks to pass unchallenged. He therefore

resolved to refer all the libellous articles written against him to the police tribunal of the Hotel-de-Ville.

More fortunate than in 1776, he found an advocate who undertook to support his case. This advocate was a worthy man named Maton de la Varenne. He espoused the executioner's interests with much kindness, and henceforth he was a friend of the family. The case was called on January 16, 1790, but it was put off until the 27th of the same month.

All the delinquents appeared, with the exception of Gorsas. My grandfather had no difficulty in showing that he had never been arrested, and that the presses belonged to his tenant M. Rozé; and M. Maton de la Varenne proved that the writings of the latter contained nothing treasonable, since those which had been seized were returned to him on the following day with an authorisation to continue his publications. It may be interesting to the reader to see a few extracts of M. Maton's speech, which my grandfather caused to be printed at the time, and of which I have several copies in my possession. It is a curious sample of the somewhat emphatic eloquence of the time. These quotations in any case, are better than my poor prose.

The following is the exordium of the plea:

'Gentlemen,—If the advocate, as the interpreter of the laws, were not passionless as the laws themselves; if prejudices, the monstrous offspring of misled imagination, could disarm his courage; if he only assisted men of rank; if he made any exception in the choice of his clients, you would not see me now before you, supporting

the plea of the executioner. But, gentlemen, what particularly honours our office is the protection which we accord to the weak, to the oppressed, to the widow and the orphan. Any consideration that could prevent us from doing our duty would be a crime. Unprecedented defamation, atrocious calumny, infamous libels—such are the weapons which a few audacious journalists have not been ashamed to use against the honest citizen on whose behalf I now appeal to your sense of justice.

'In the course of your sitting of the 16th of the present month, we had the honour to read to you the different libels by which my client is represented as one of the leaders of a body of aristocrats, and of infamous conspiracies tending to prevent the happy regeneration which is now in course of accomplishment. You have seen how his house was designated as the infamous refuge wherein the enemies of the nation assembled in order to plot against the country. You have had copies of interrogatories which never took place, and of the confessions he was falsely reported to have made. No doubt, gentlemen, you were filled with indignation when you perceived how malice could lead astray a number of writers whose talent might be useful to their fellow-countrymen if they used it to point out their privileges and rights, to enlighten the masses, to instruct kings and depositaries of authority. Be good enough to listen again to the reading of these licentious pamphlets; you will see that defamation and calumny could not go further, and you will feel how necessary it is to

promptly repress utterances which endanger the individual safety of my client.' (Here M. Maton de la Varenne read the articles, and resumed.) 'I ask you, gentlemen, and I ask MM. Prudhomme, Gorsas, De Beaulieu, Descentis, and Desmoulins, whether libel can pour out its poison with greater fury. When one reads such atrocities, one's blood kindles. Has not, after this, my client the right to demand redress? To question such a right, gentlemen, would be an impeachment of your sense of justice. "Calumny," says M. Dareau in his "Treatise on Insult," "is a poison so dangerous to society that it should never pass unpunished." The vilest crime is contained in calumny. An author celebrated for his talents and numerous misfortunes says that "defamation is to the mind what poisoning is to the body." "It is," he continues, "a kind of attack from which it is in some degree impossible to protect oneself. It is a thousand times easier to credit an assertion which destroys the honour of a citizen than to introduce a deadly substance into his body. The penalty should therefore be measured out by the difficulty which is found in protecting oneself. There are no antidotes against calumny, whereas the effects of poison may be met." Further, the same author expresses himself in these terms: "All that is not contradicted is accepted as true. The most revolting slander soon acquires the force of truth; a cry is soon raised which pronounces the condemnation of the unfortunate victim." The consequence of what I have just said, gentlemen, is that the law cannot be too severe against calumniators and libellers. Of all injuries that can be

inflicted upon a citizen, calumny is assuredly the most atrocious, since it springs from low and corrupt motives; and slander has before this met with condign punishment. Written, printed, and circulated defamation is far more deserving of punishment.'

Here the orator reviewed all the authorities in his favour, and recalled the Draconian edicts of 1626 and 1686, so rigorously carried out in the case of the unfortunate Larcher, and which provided that 'all those who circulated libels were subject to the penalty of death.' M. Maton de la Varenne came to the more recent laws on libel, and finished with the following words:

'The writings whereof my client complains are of a nature to destroy his honour. They have produced, and produce still, deep effects in the provinces and in Paris. Some say that, feeling that he could not show his innocence, he blew his brains out in prison, and others that he is soon to be hanged, and that his body is to be cut in several pieces, and nailed to the gates of the town; others, again, that he has been reprieved in consequence of the important information he has given concerning the enemies of the Revolution. He therefore has a clear right to an apology and to damages.

'You have heard, gentlemen, the chief reasons I have to urge in the present case. It is that of the public; it relates to the individuality of the citizen I now defend and to his family. What I demand on his behalf are *the rights of man.* You are too equitable not to compensate him for the injury he has received. However favourable your decision may be to him, it

cannot entirely dispel the prejudice which the calumnies I have spoken of have raised against him. If my client could repeat to you the sentiments he has expressed before me, if I were allowed to make here his profession of faith, to describe his patriotism, he would tell you, gentlemen, as he told me: "What have I done to those who insult me without justice or pity in the writings to which I am compelled to call your attention? What proof can they furnish of the atrocious imputations which they print against me? What interest have they in defaming an honest citizen, who is sufficiently unhappy at having to discharge functions against which his sentiments revolt? My dear citizens," my client would add, "is it just at the time when the country is coming to new life, when the odious prejudice which weighed upon me is passing away, when the nation is restoring to me my rights as man and citizen, that I could betray you? Far from taking part in plots, and participating in attempts, of which the mere idea fills me with horror, I call down shame and execration upon the perverse men who try to overthrow the superb edifice raised by the fathers of the country."'

All the defendants, with the exception of Gorsas, offered to retract their allegations. MM. Prudhomme, De Beaulieu, Descentis, and Camille Desmoulins were condemned to insert an apology in the earliest issue of their papers, and they were warned to be more prudent in the future. As to Gorsas, he was sentenced to a fine of one hundred livres. He appealed against the sentence, and this was an occasion for M. Maton de la

Varenne to make another speech, which I can quote *in extenso*:

'Gentlemen,—The equitable judgment you passed upon M. Gorsas led me to believe that he would rest satisfied, and thus make amends for an act which fully deserved your severity. It appears that our opinion of him was too favourable. M. Gorsas now appeals against your sentence. Does he, then, imagine that he can quietly libel honest men because he thinks they cannot defend themselves? Does he not know that all tribunals are open to all people without distinction, and that the authors of libels meet there with the punishment provided for the enemies of the public welfare? You have seen, gentlemen, in a paper called the "Courrier de Paris dans les Provinces," that M. Gorsas charges my client with having the presses "in which are printed all the abominable libels circulated in the provinces to excite to rebellion and murder." You have seen also that M. Gorsas announced the arrest and imprisonment of the citizen I defend. After circulating throughout Europe calumnies of such a nature against a man who is well known for his patriotism, M. Gorsas has the audacity to complain of the just sentence passed by you. By hoping to escape the punishment he so richly deserves, he insults your principles, your wisdom, and the law represented by you.

'Not only has M. Gorsas circulated false accusations against my client; he has also dared, since your sentence, to call him a bribed vagabond, and to express astonishment at an executioner being able to find advocates to

defend his cause. Does he, then, wish us to describe his private life? But, gentlemen, Sanson is too indulgent to follow such a course. Let Gorsas think of what he has done. Let him fear the moment when I may be compelled to make public certain acts of his. Let M. Gorsas know that one has no right to appear before a court of justice when one leads a doubtful life and professes anti-patriotic sentiments. As to the astonishment expressed by him at our having undertaken to defend M. Sanson, we have only to answer that all men are born equal in rights; that we regard as the noblest task that of defending the oppressed, whoever they may be, against the oppressor; and that we care little for what calumny and vengeance may be devised against us for doing our duty.

'In one of your preceding sittings we deplored the dangerous consequences of liberty of the press. How is it, gentlemen, that we are already obliged to regret a boon which removes the limits assigned by an odious despotism to human knowledge? Why has the finest prerogative of a free people become an instrument of calumny in the hands of a few men? Let M. Gorsas devote his talents to the defence, and not to the impeachment, of honourable men; let him enlighten opinions and principles, and we shall be the first to admire him. But, gentlemen, it is time that the scandal to which he has given rise in and out of town should be stopped; it is time for you to punish a fearful libel. My client trusts that you will confirm your first decision. I therefore persist in my conclusions.'

The judgment was, in fact, confirmed; but Gorsas, who had obtained some mitigation of his sentence by promising an immediate apology, behaved in the most disgraceful manner. In a preceding issue he had already made some poor jokes on the action in which he had thought fit not to appear. Under the heading of 'Anecdote,' he wrote:

'Yesterday a very singular case came before the Commune; it was a dispute between Sanson, *bourreau* of the town of Paris, and a number of literary men. We are told that one of the principal points of the action is that Sanson objects to the appellation of *bourreau*, because it is said in several decisions of the council that he is to be termed executioner of criminal sentences. The executioner demanded, among other things, that the word *bourreau* should be left out of the Dictionary of the Academy.

'There never was a better occasion for the application of the words: *Carnifex! quoque, nisi carnificis nomine, tu appellandus?*

'We are also assured that the executioner's counsel said that a *bourreau* could only throw light on his case with the lantern of the Rue de la Vannerie.'

It will be remarked that Gorsas did not inform his readers that he was one of the journalists he mentions, and that he deceived them as to the object of the action brought by my grandfather. But this was not all. Two days after his second condemnation, he made an ironical and malicious insinuation, in spite of his promises.

Speaking of the unhappy affairs of the Marquis de Favras, which had just been brought to light, he said :

'The hearing of the witnesses on behalf of the accused is still continued, and it is believed that the public prosecutor will be let off for his conclusions, M. le Marquis de Favras for a good fright, and "my co-citizen," Sanson, *bourreau* of Paris, for his hopes.'

If I have related at some length this dispute with the press, it is because much importance was attached to its result in my family, and I may add, in our corporation. Two of the writers who libelled my grandfather, Gorsas and Camille Desmoulins, soon afterwards met their former victim on the scaffold. Whether they remembered this dispute with my grandfather, and were again disposed to say, *Carnifex ! quoquè, nisi carnificis nomine, tu appellandus ?* I cannot say ; but Gorsas was mistaken when, in the last paragraph I have quoted, he alluded to the unfortunate Favras. It is his execution which I now have to describe.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MARQUIS DE FAVRAS.

THREE great trials engrossed the public mind in 1790. They were those of Augeard, the farmer-general, charged with furnishing the Court with the funds with which the troops of the Champ de Mars had been bribed; of the Baron de Besenval, colonel-general of the Swiss Guards, who commanded at the Champ de Mars; and, lastly, of the Marquis de Favras, charged with having attempted to introduce into Paris a number of armed soldiers, with the object of getting rid of the chiefs of the principal administrations, of stealing the seals of the State, and of taking away the King and the royal family to Péronne.

MM. Augeard and De Besenval were acquitted; and this circumstance, which excited much irritation, rendered the position of the Marquis de Favras extremely perilous.

Thomas Mahy, Marquis de Favras, was born at Blois in 1745. He had two brothers, the Baron Mahy de Cormeré and M. de Chitenay. He entered the musketeers in 1760, took part in the campaign of 1761, and became lieutenant of the Swiss Guards of Monsieur,

brother of the King. He married in 1774, gave up his commission, and went to Vienna, where he obtained the recognition of his wife as the only and legitimate daughter of the prince of Anhalt-Schaunburg. Being of a very adventurous spirit, he went to Holland, and commanded a legion during the insurrection against the Statholder in 1787.

In 1789 he was a man of forty-five years of age, an excellent type of the accomplished gentilhomme, and full of enthusiasm and yearning for hazardous enterprises. After witnessing the revolutionary scene that took place at Versailles, he devised a plan for the liberation of the King ; and he sought to carry it out with more zeal than prudence. If his plan was such as the spy Bertrand de Molleville reports in his memoirs, it was altogether impracticable. The main object of this plan was to assemble an army of 30,000 royalists, who were to be enrolled secretly. Such an enterprise demanded a great deal of money, and the greatest discretion. M. de Favras took much trouble to procure the funds, and communicated his plan to many persons, who, in return, bestowed on him more praise than money. Very soon, however, three recruits who were in his pay, Morel, Turcati, and Marquiès, denounced him, and in the night of December 25 the Marquis de Favras was arrested at his residence in the Place Royale, by order of the National Assembly.

On the following day an unknown hand denounced a far higher personage than the Marquis de Favras as the leader of the conspiracy. An anonymous paper was cir-

culated in Paris in which Monsieur, brother of the King, was mentioned as being the soul of the plot. This created such a sensation that the Comte de Provence deemed it prudent to contradict the report publicly. He appeared before the Commune and delivered a speech which was received with enthusiasm; but he could not and did not exonerate the Marquis de Favras, who was arraigned and took his trial on February 18, 1790.

As the prisoner was brought forward a few groans were uttered by the public; and, from the demeanour of the magistrates and the disposition of the public, M. de Favras no doubt foresaw that he was doomed. He nevertheless retained his presence of mind, and defended himself with much spirit. There can be no doubt that the Marquis did conspire, like most noblemen of the time; but proofs against him were utterly wanting, and the accused easily showed that sentence could not be passed upon him without a flagrant breach of justice. The judges, however, were in fear of their lives, and the indulgence they had shown to Besenval and Augeard was the cause of the pitiless treatment they inflicted upon Favras.

On February 29 the Châtelet passed sentence. The Marquis de Favras was condemned to be hanged, after amende honorable before the portico of Nôtre Dame. He betrayed no emotion; and when the president of the court told him that his sole hope was in the assistance of religion, he answered, 'Pardon me, sir; I have also the consolation which I find in my conscience.'

From the beginning of the sitting the Châtelet was

surrounded by an angry crowd which loudly called for the death of Favras. While the sentence was being read to the accused the executioner was directed to erect a gibbet on the Place de Grève. Favras therefore left the court only to be taken straight to the scaffold, and no one seemed conscious of the terrible precedent which was thus being established. So much hurry took place that as he was about to enter the cart my grandfather remembered that he had not executed the full prescription of the sentence, and he told M. de Favras that he must undress. The latter did not answer; but when his hands were untied, he helped the assistants to take off his clothes, and appeared in the cart in his shirt, and with naked feet.

Loud cries burst from the crowd. 'A rope around his neck!' was the universal demand. The prisoner made a sign to Charles Henri Sanson to obey, and did not even shudder when he felt the contact of the hemp which was to deprive him of life. He held a taper in his right hand. The cortége moved forward with the greatest difficulty through the dense masses. When it reached the *parvis* of Notre Dame the Marquis was made to kneel and pronounce the formula of amende honorable. M. de Favras took the paper from the hands of the clerk, and, after reading it in a loud and distinct voice, he added:

'Ready to appear before God, I forgive those who have accused me. I die innocent. The people clamour for my death. Since a victim is needed, it is better that I should die, instead of some other innocent man whose courage might fail him in the face of undeserved death.

I am about to suffer for crimes which I have not committed.'

When he returned to the cart his face was slightly pale, but he retained his fortitude to the last. In reaching the Place de Grève M. de Favras asked leave to write his will at the Hotel-de-Ville. This document was published a few days after his death. It denounced no one, but one of the phrases contained an awful accusation against a person described by historians as the Comte de Provence. The time had now come for the performance of the last act of the tragedy. It was dark, and, as the Grève was imperfectly lighted, lanterns had been provided on the scaffold. M. de Favras advanced with a firm step. The extraordinary courage he displayed touched some among the howling mob; but his enemies were in overwhelming numbers, and as he approached the ladder a man cried out:

'Allons, saute Marquis!'

M. de Favras took no notice of this supreme taunt; he ascended the ladder, and when he was high enough to be heard by the crowd, he said, raising his voice:

'Citizens, I die innocent. Pray for me!'

He repeated these words at every step, and when he reached the top of the ladder, looking up to the executioner's assistant, who was sitting astride on the arm of the gibbet, 'And you, do your duty,' he added.

These were his last words. They had scarcely passed his lips when his body was swinging in the air.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A PETITION TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

I NOW return to the vindication of the rights of citizen carried before the National Assembly by my grandfather. His petition was discussed, as I said before, in the sitting of December 23, 1789. The decision which was then given was, in my own estimation, quite satisfactory. But my grandfather was of a different opinion. It may be interesting to relate what took place in this first sitting before I allude to Charles Henri Sanson's attempt to obtain a national recognition of his rights.

Among the members who espoused the cause of the executioner was M. de Clermont-Tonnerre, who expressed himself in the following terms :

'Certain professions are bad or good. If they are bad, the country should suppress them ; if they are good, they should be considered so. Among these professions there are two which I do not like to mention in a breath ; but in the eyes of legislators, nothing but good and evil should be separated. I speak of public executioners and actors.

'I wish to say concerning the first of these two

professions that we have merely to react against prejudice. When a soldier is condemned to death, the hand which strikes him is not infamous. All that is ordered by the law is just. It orders the death of a criminal; the executioner obeys the law. It is absurd that the law should say to him, "Do this; and if you do it, you shall be covered with infamy."'

The Abbé Maury dissented from this view.

'The exclusion of executioners of justice is not founded on a prejudice,' he exclaimed. 'Every honest man shudders at the sight of the one who murders his fellow-creatures in cold blood. It is said that the law requires this action; but does the law order a man to be an executioner?'

A pale, sharp-featured orator ascended the tribune, and pronounced the following words:

'It can never be said in this Assembly that a necessary function of the law can be branded by the law. Such a law must be changed.'

The last speaker was Maximilien Robespierre. It is worth noting that neither of the two supporters of the executioner dared to defend him without accusing the law. The law and the office are, in fact, linked to each other, and it is impossible to denounce the one without branding the other. If the views of Robespierre and Clermont-Tonnerre had been adopted by the Assembly, it is probable that the bloody scenes of the Revolution would have been averted by the abolition of capital punishment. It is also curious to observe that this great question was brought before the National Assembly.

By a strange contrast which shows how sudden are the fluctuations of the human mind, the abolition of capital punishment had no more ardent advocates than Marat and Robespierre.

Charles Henri Sanson now presented a formal memorial to the Assembly; and it was through the medium of his former counsel, M. Maton de la Varenne, that he urged his plea, in the name of his brother Louis Cyr Charlemagne Sanson, executioner of the Prévoté de l'Hôtel, as well as on behalf of his provincial *confrères*. This memorial I cannot pass without quotation, inasmuch as it is altogether forgotten and obsolete. I do not share the opinions therein expressed, but it may give an idea of the view taken of their profession by former executioners:

'This is not a judicial memorial, but the grievance of a number of men branded with infamy, and who only live to suffer the humiliations, the shame, and the opprobrium deserved by crime only; this is the complaint of men, unhappily indispensable, who came to lament, before the fathers of the country, over the injustice of their co-citizens, and to claim the undeniable rights which nature and law had bestowed upon them; it is also a respectful remonstrance to the august Assembly of representatives of the nation, and a request for the proper interpretation of the decree of December 24 last.

'The question is not, as has been said by an obscure pamphleteer whose object it is to calumniate the members of the National Assembly, their decrees, and the

public, whether the executioners of criminal sentences shall sit beside the mayors, or shall have the rank of lieutenant-general of the national guard in the different towns of the kingdom. What should be ascertained is, whether the executioners are eligible, if they have the right to sit in assemblies; in short, if they are to enjoy the privileges of citizens. The question is not doubtful, except to weak men whose judgment is influenced by prejudice.

'Executioners are officially nominated to their functions; they hold their office from the hands of the king; their commissions, like those of officers, are only to be obtained on a favourable account of the candidates being presented and approved of.

'A few persons childishly believe that the commission of executioner is thrown at the candidate's feet; that it is gratuitously delivered; and that the executioner elect takes the oath on his knees. Hence they infer that his profession is infamous.

'No one will attempt to deny that this opinion springs from a popular mistake, when it is the fact that the executioner receives his commission from hand to hand; that the cost of purchase is considerable (the commission of executioner in Paris costs six thousand and forty-eight livres); that he takes the oath standing, like any other official; and that he is appointed on the advice of the public prosecutor.

'There is assuredly no difference between other commissions and that of the executioner so far as formalities of reception are concerned. The prejudice of which he

is a victim has been strengthened by dint of time, and he is regarded with contempt when it is too late for him to adopt another profession.

'Among the Israelites the plaintiff always carried out the judgment given in his favour. If a murderer was to be put to death, the family of the victim, young men chosen by the prince, and even the people vied for the honour of accomplishing the mission of executioner, because the avenger of a crime was regarded as a benefactor of society.

'To this custom, which cannot be styled barbarous without doing wrong to the humane and equitable people who retained it, another succeeded, which proves that the Ancients saw no dishonour in the act of putting a criminal to death. The judges themselves carried out their own sentences. The custom also was to allow accusers to carry out sentences passed on the accused. If this custom was abolished in the prosperous days of the Roman republic, it was because the executioner, impelled by feelings of revenge, abused his privilege.

'In Germany, before the creation of the office of executioner, the duty devolved on the youngest magistrate on the bench. In a few towns of the empire where this custom was not adopted, the last comer, the most recently married inhabitant, discharged the functions of executioner. These customs are transmitted to us by Adrian Beyer, of Frankfort, who informs us that in Germany the office of executioner of criminal justice is highly prized, that the emoluments are considerable, and that the holder is invested with titles.

'Even in France the functions of executioner have not at all times been regarded as degrading for whoever discharges them. Denisart, in his "Memento of Jurisprudence—V. Executioner," mentions an account furnished by the Land Administration in 1417, in which it is stated that forty-five sous *parisis* were paid to Étienne Lebré, styled *master of the high justice of the King our sire.*

'Let it not be imagined, however, that the executioners who indite the present petition wish to be considered as the equals of magistrates and as influential officials. They have no such pretension. But there is a vast difference between honouring the profession and discrediting it.

'What would society become, of what use would be judges, if an active and legitimate power did not carry out the judgments given in satisfaction of the outrages against citizens protected by the law? If the punishment of the culprit is a disgrace for him who inflicts it, the magistrates who have passed sentence, the clerk who has written the judgment, the public prosecutor, and the criminal lieutenant must also have their share of the disgrace. But these officers do not incur disgrace; far from this, they consider themselves honoured by their functions. Why, then, should the man who is the last participator in the infliction of punishment, who hates the crime he punishes, be disgraced by the discharge of functions that are the complement of those of a judge?

'A ruffian sets fire to a citizen's house, dips his hands

in his neighbour's or his father's blood, or conspires against his country; you are informed of his crimes, you demand his death, you go to see him die, and yet you will not recognise as a citizen, and you persist in considering as infamous, the official who inflicts upon the miscreant a punishment which you have called for! . . . Frenchmen, be just and logical! Confess that crime must remain unpunished, or that an executioner is needed to punish it. Confess that neither the magistrate nor the executioner, but the culprit alone, is guilty of violating the laws of nature; that without this just and legitimate crusade against crime society must be continually molested. Confess also that it has been unjust to extend shame attached to crime to the officer who punishes it.

'By what singular misapprehension, also, is the executioner of criminal judgments discredited, while in a regiment soldiers who inflict capital punishment are in no wise disgraced for so doing? Is not the case identical on both sides? Is not a culprit punished in both cases? It is a strange contradiction indeed to contest the citizenship of a man who carries out the sentences of civil tribunals, and to recognise as citizens those who carry out capital sentences passed by a council of war!

'Not only is it against the spirit of the law and reason to consider executioners as deserving of public execration; they cannot be denied the quality of citizen without also denying the least contestable social rights. Executioners pay, as the other subjects of the King, all public

and local taxes; they furnish the holy bread in their parishes, and they are registered as members of the national guard. Why should they be deprived of the advantages enjoyed by other citizens, since they are compelled to bear their share of the public expenditure? Fatal power of prejudice among a great, humane, and generous nation!

'The consequence of all that has just been stated for the information of the Assembly, is that it is unjust to contest the civil rights of the executioners; that they have a right to attend the meetings of citizens, and that they are eligible for situations such as they may be thought fit to hold. It only remains for us to see whether the decree of December 24, 1789, has admitted our claims and clearly decided that executioners are citizens.

'The first thought that occurs to prejudiced people after reading this decree is that it does not mention the case of executioners; that the settlement of the question raised as to the claims of their profession is avoided; that they remain under the stigma of prejudice; that the task of carrying out criminal judgments is regarded as infamous; and lastly, that after enacting that no other reasons for exclusion are maintainable against the eligibility of any citizen than those resulting from the constitutional decrees, the quality of citizens is not frankly conceded to executioners. As a consequence it is imagined that executioners are unfit for election and cannot occupy civil or military posts. This opinion, although it may perhaps be contrary to the spirit of the

law, is not devoid of reason; for, in order to fix irrevocably the fate of a number of men unjustly visited with public reprobation, the National Assembly might have decreed the eligibility *of every Frenchman* or naturalised Frenchman. This manner of expressing the spirit of the decree could not but have given full satisfaction to the executioners.

'A constitutional law should be clear and precise; it should be couched in clear language, and should only admit of one interpretation. The executioners are convinced that it was not the intention of the Assembly to deprive them of their rights as citizens. If they now ask for a definite interpretation of the law, it is because they are constantly told, throughout the kingdom, "that the National Assembly, when it decided on the advantages to be conceded to citizens, never intended to include them."

'It may be possible that executioners will not be appointed to public duties immediately after the interpretation they ask for; but it will at least remain decreed that they are citizens; they will be enabled to enter assemblies; the prejudice by which they are considered infamous will disappear by efflux of time, and society will no longer be deprived of their co-operation and patriotism, and of the example of their virtues.

'The petition of the executioners will doubtless appear ridiculous and preposterous to those who are governed by public opinion, and who cannot discard old customs and prejudices; but when the nation is recovering its freedom, when all privileges are being destroyed, when equity is becoming supreme, prejudices should be de-

nounced. They cannot be just, since they are in contradiction to the law; and why should the office of executioner be considered infamous by public opinion since the law does not regard it as such? Let men reform their customs; let them learn to think for themselves; and then the profession which has at all times wounded their sensibilities and appeared to them contrary to humanity will no longer seem to them to be degrading.

'How many, in a class of men now calumniated by the cowards who attack them because they think they are without friends—how many among these men have deserved the esteem and respect of their fellow-citizens! Not a few old men of the town of Rennes can still remember the virtue and kindness of Jacques Ganier, who died some thirty years ago, after discharging the functions of executioner during many years. He gave to the poor all that was not strictly necessary to himself. His death was to them a public calamity, and for a long time his grave was visited by grateful friends. The numerous services rendered by other executioners are well known. They gave, and give still, gratuitous assistance to citizens of all ranks, and their knowledge of chirurgery, medicine, and botany has been of invaluable use. Would it be just to exclude from society men who are often its benefactors?

'We now have to protest against the denomination of *bourreau* which is frequently given to executioners.[1] A

[1] The origin of the word *bourreau*, by which the executioner of high justice is frequently designated, is found in 1260. The name originated from a clerk named Borel, who obtained the fief of Bellemcombre on condition that

decree of the Parliament of Rouen, dated November 16, 1681, is couched in the following terms:

'"Persons are forbidden to call executioners *bourreau*, under penalty of a fine of fifty livres, twenty-five of which shall belong to the King, and the remainder to the executioner thus described."

'A decision given by the Parliament of Paris, in 1767, in favour of Joseph Doublot, executioner of Blois, forbids all persons to call the said Doublot *bourreau*, under penalty of a fine of 100 livres.

'Another decision of the Parliament of Rouen enacts the same penalty in favour of Ferey and Jouenne, executioners of Rouen, and adds that the latter shall be allowed, together with their families, to enter places of recreation and amusement.

'These decisions were confirmed by the King in 1787. The Assembly should follow the example.

'Having demonstrated the legitimacy of their profession and the injustice of the denomination under which they are commonly designated, the executioners ask the representatives of the nation: 1. To add the following clause to the third part of their decree of December 24, 1789: "Decrees also that no other reasons

he should hang the thieves of the district. But as he was a priest, and as the Church 'mentioned in its prayers that it did not like blood,' he paid a layman to discharge his functions. The King furnished him with provisions throughout the year in consequence of his function, which he was supposed to discharge himself. It became the custom to call Richard Borel *le Borel*, and to describe as *Boreaux* all those who put criminals to death. The orthography of the name was altered and became *bourreau* or *bourreaux*. The denomination was not then intended as an insult, but it bore a contemptuous signification in the 16th century.—*Note of the Memorial.*

of exclusion than those contained in constitutional decrees can be used against the eligibility of any Frenchman," unless the Assembly should prefer to declare that it considers executioners as citizens; 2. To order the enforcement of the foregoing decisions regarding the use of the word *bourreau*; and to add such penalties as the Assembly may think proper. By so doing the Legislature will restore to society a number of men who have never been unworthy of public consideration.

'*Signed*, C. H. SANSON.
'L. C. C. SANSON.
'Acting on behalf of all their colleagues throughout the kingdom.

'MATON DE LA VARENNE,
Barrister.'

Strange to say, this petition found many apologists in the press. The 'Fidèle Observateur,' the 'Journal Général de la Police et des Tribunaux,' and Marat's paper, 'L'Ami du Peuple,' took up the cause of executioners. The Assembly, however, did not come to a decision with regard to their claim. Charles Henri Sanson was fain to content himself with the original form of the decree, which, in my opinion, was sufficiently satisfactory. In the sitting of December 24, Robespierre had said very judiciously: 'I do not think a special law is necessary; those who are not excluded are admitted.' Besides, the time was drawing near when the rehabilitation sought by my grandfather and his colleagues was to become a

kind of apotheosis, and to surpass all their most sanguine expectations. Charles Henri Sanson was about to receive official congratulations, popular ovations—and, in fact, to become one of the essential functionaries of the State.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE GUILLOTINE.

DOCTOR GUILLOTIN pursued with much perseverance the task he had undertaken to accomplish. After obtaining the sanction of the Assembly for his motion demanding equality of punishment in cases of capital sentences, he again drew attention to those of his other motions which had been adjourned. These were, it may be remembered, to the effect that crime should be considered as wholly personal; that the disgrace of punishment should not extend to the families of culprits; that confiscation should be abolished; that the bodies of executed criminals should be delivered to their relations if asked for; and, if not, that they should be buried without any mention on the register of the kind of death they had suffered.

All these reforms were favourably regarded by the Assembly. But Guillotin's special object was to obtain the adoption of another innovation. Disgusted as he was at the sight of the gibbet, which exhibited a corpse for hours before the mob, he determined to substitute for all former modes a punishment by which suffering would be mitigated. He saw no better means for the

furtherance of his object than decapitation. It had hitherto been reserved for a privileged class, and, in all respects, it was a more manly and natural way of inflicting death. But then the executioner's sword had often failed to accomplish its work; the hand was apt to tremble, and machinery only could give a guarantee of unswerving precision. Guillotin's purpose was, then, to discover the best decapitating machine; and although the search he undertook was novel work for a man who had hitherto endeavoured to save life rather than to devise means of destroying it, he pursued it with untiring zeal. In order to gain time, he merely suggested the recognition of his principle in the following article:

'In every case of capital punishment the mode of execution shall be the same. The criminal shall be decapitated by means of a mechanical contrivance.'

This proposal was made exactly three years before the 'mechanical contrivance' received the baptism of royal blood. It was sent to the Committee of Seven, and only became law in 1791, when decapitation was definitively adopted; but the process by which decapitation was to take place was not indicated. This omission caused much alarm to my grandfather; for he foresaw that, unless mechanical means were devised, the heaviest responsibility would rest with him. He sent a memorial to the minister of justice, in which he enumerated the difficulties of decapitation with the sword, the necessity of firmness and courage not to be found in every culprit, and the impossibility of numerous executions, in consequence of the bluntness of swords frequently used.

'There can be no doubt,' he said, in his expostulation, 'that when I shall have to deal consecutively with several criminals, the terror excited by the sight of blood must lead to deplorable consequences. The other culprits must lose the firmness which is absolutely needed in such executions.' Charles Henri Sanson ended by insisting on the urgent necessity of a machine which would keep the sufferer's body in a horizontal position, and ensure prompter and safer operation than could be expected of hand-work.

This was precisely what Dr. Guillotin was seeking, and he visited my grandfather to ask his advice. But their long conversations led to no satisfactory results. They examined in vain everything which, in the past and in other countries, could realise the idea of the machine. Three German engravings by Pontz, Aldegreder, and Lucus von Cranach, and an Italian picture dated 1555, furnished a few models, but none was perfect. The Italian engraving represented an instrument of execution called the Mannaïa, which had sometimes been used in Italy, particularly in Genoa, at the time of the execution of Giustiniani the famous conspirator. The apparatus was erected upon a scaffold; the axe was placed between two perpendicular slip boards: the culprit was kneeling, with his head on a block, and the executioner was holding a rope which prevented the axe from falling. The German engravings were almost identical with this.

Minute information was also collected concerning divers punishments inflicted in Persia, and later in

Scotland; but these were inferior varieties of the Mannaïa. Decapitation by machinery had even taken place in France, Marshal de Montmorency having been executed at Toulouse, in 1631, by means of a sliding axe.

Nothing better than this last process could be discovered, and it would most likely have been adopted had not my grandfather persistently objected that the attitude of the culprit was a point of great importance, which could not be overlooked. It was almost as difficult, he said, for a fainting man to remain on his knees as to stand on his feet. Hanging him, or tying him on the wheel, was possible; but it was hopeless to expect that he would, except in rare cases, remain motionless while the death-blow was being inflicted.

By a fortunate chance, Charles Henri Sanson had become acquainted with a German engineer of the name of Schmidt. This man was a manufacturer of musical instruments; he was very ingenious in his craft, and was a passionate lover of music. He had sold some instruments to my grandfather; and, as the latter himself played the violin, Schmidt frequently joined him in a duet, Charles Henri playing the violin and the German playing the clavecin.[1] One evening, after playing an air of *Iphigénie en Aulide*, Charles Henri spoke to his companion of his perplexity. Schmidt hesitated for a moment, and then traced a few rapid lines on a piece of paper, which he handed to my grandfather. *It was the guillotine.*

Charles Henri Sanson looked at the drawing with

[1] A primitive form of the piano.

unfeigned surprise and satisfaction. Schmidt told him that he had long doubted whether it was proper for him to have anything to do with instruments which were designed to kill, but that, seeing his friend's perplexity, he could not resist the temptation of assisting him.

It was thus that the guillotine came into the world, as it were, in the midst of a concert.

Charles Henri Sanson informed Guillotin of the discovery. The doctor was beside himself with joy, for he had pursued his hobby with extraordinary vigour and enthusiasm. Certain biographers have erroneously asserted that Guillotin regretted his action in the matter, and doubted the reality of the service he had rendered to the country. Up to the last moment of his life Guillotin remained convinced that he had accomplished a duty, and had initiated a great reform. If the people gave the name of guillotine to the new instrument of execution—although, I need hardly repeat, the doctor was not the real inventor of it—it was simply an act of justice; for it was owing to his efforts that decapitation and the machine used for its infliction were adopted.

He described the new apparatus in the sitting of April 31, 1791. Carried away by enthusiasm, he made use of expressions which excited loud laughter, and almost imperilled the success of his cause. He said that the culprit would only feel *a slight freshness on the neck.* The phrase was sufficiently ingenious; but when he added, '*With this machine I chop your head off in a twinkling, and you do not suffer,*' the Assembly gave

way to irrepressible laughter. Howbeit, the legislators determined to abide by their first decision. A long correspondence took place between Guillotin, M. Roederer, procureur-general of the Commune, and my grandfather. The Assembly at length appointed Dr. Antoine Louis to enquire into the new mode of decapitation.

Louis was the King's physician, and his royal patron heard of the mission he had to discharge. The dexterity of this prince as a locksmith is well known. He wished to assist Louis, and to give his personal attention to a matter in which, he said, he was interested as a sovereign. The King and his physician expressed a desire to examine the plan of the machine proposed by Guillotin. The latter was therefore requested by Dr. Louis to come to the Tuileries, and he was told to bring my grandfather with him.

They found Dr. Louis in his closet. After a few polite words had been exchanged by the two physicians, Guillotin showed Louis the plan of the machine drawn by Schmidt, to which my grandfather had added a few explanations. While Louis was examining it with great attention, a door was opened, and a new comer appeared in the closet. Dr. Louis, who was seated, immediately rose. The stranger looked coldly at Dr. Guillotin, who bowed; and abruptly addressing Louis, he said to him:

'Well, doctor, what do you think of it?'

'It seems to me perfect,' answered the doctor; 'and fully justifies what M. Guillotin told me. You can

judge for yourself.' And he handed the plan to the last comer, who looked at it, and then shook his head doubtfully.

'The knife has the shape of a crescent. Do you think a knife thus shaped would be suitable for all necks? There are some which it certainly could not cut.'

Since the speaker's entrance, Charles Henri Sanson had lost neither one of his words nor one of his gestures. The sound of the voice showed him that his first impression was a true one; the King was again before him; but, by the plain costume he wore, it was easy to see that he wished to remain incognito. Charles Henri was struck by his remark, and looking at the King's neck, he saw that its proportions were just those which justified the royal remark. The King again spoke, and he asked in a low voice, 'Is this the *man?*'

Doctor Louis answered in the affirmative.

'Ask him what he thinks of the matter.'

'You heard this gentleman's observation,' said Louis; 'what is your opinion with regard to the shape of the knife?'

'The gentleman is quite right,' answered my grandfather; 'the knife is not what it should be.'

The King smiled with an air of satisfaction, and taking a pen which lay on the table, he rectified the plan, and substituted an oblique line for the crescent.

'I may be mistaken, after all,' he added; 'the two shapes should be tried when the experiments are made.'

He then rose and retired, waving his hand. Such

was the King's second interview with my grandfather. Their next official meeting was to take place on January 21 of the following year.

Five days after this conference, that is on March 7, Antoine Louis presented his report to the Assembly, in which he proposed the pure and simple adoption of the machine, such as it had been sketched by Schmidt, with the alternative of one or the other knife. On March 20 the Assembly passed the report, and Dr. Louis was requested to superintend the construction of the first decapitating machine. The work was done by a carpenter named Guidon, who charged 5,500 francs for it. When the guillotine was finished my grandfather and two of his brothers went to the prison of Bicêtre to make experiments on three corpses. This took place on April 17, 1792, in the courtyard of the prison, in the presence of Drs. Antoine Louis, Phillippe Pinel, and Cabanis. The prisoners eagerly looked on from the windows.

The three corpses were decapitated, one after the other. The first two experiments with the oblique knife succeeded; the third, with the knife shaped as a crescent, failed. The oblique knife was therefore adopted.

A week afterwards my grandfather had occasion to test the new system on a man named Pelletin, sentenced to death for theft and an attempted murder. Some uneasiness was felt with regard to the behaviour of the mob at the sight of the new instrument of death, as the following letter, addressed by Roederer to La Fayette, sufficiently shows :—

'Paris, April 25, 1792.

'Sir,—The new mode of decapitation must certainly attract a considerable number of spectators to the Grève, and it is necessary to take special measures to prevent any attempt to destroy the machine. I therefore think it indispensable that you should order the gendarmes who are to attend the execution to remain until the machine is taken away.'

The last episode of the history of the wheel may be remembered. Some such event, it was feared, might inaugurate the history of the instrument which some already called *louison* or *louisette*, from the name of Dr. Louis, and others *guillotine*, from the name of Dr. Guillotin. The last name prevailed; but no disorder occurred. The execution took place, and fully justified my grandfather's anticipations. Pelletin was carried to the scaffold in a fainting fit, and it would have been impossible to decapitate him with the sword. The execution was a complete success.

It might now be interesting to enquire whether the guillotine is really the least cruel mode of punishment, and if, therefore, it answered the humane views of its inventors; or if, as some anatomists have asserted, decapitation is followed by horrible, and in some way posthumous, sufferings. I would rather adjourn the examination of this important question until the time when I can relate my personal recollections, and give the observations I was enabled to make in the course of my professional career. We are now close upon portentous events, the relation of which must not be deferred.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE TRIBUNAL OF AUGUST 17, 1792.

THE hour is now at hand when the history of the scaffold and the history of France are to be blended into one. In a few days the despised headsman shall become the key of the vault of the social edifice which is being constructed. Until then he could answer to those who saluted him with the insulting epithet of *bourreau*, 'Why do you despise me if you do not despise your laws?' The excitement of a nation now gives him the right to exclaim: 'It seems as if you had made a revolution only to give me work!'

The grandson of the Sanson of 1793—of the *great* Sanson, as he was called—might perhaps discard for a moment the humility which he has hitherto displayed; but let the reader be reassured. In pursuing the course of my narrative, I shall not trouble him with my personal opinions. I propose to be sparing of all observations concerning politics, and to relate as briefly as possible the events I am about to record. I will soon give up the pen to Charles Henri Sanson, my grandfather, and quote his diary exactly as he wrote it. This record begins at the end of the month of May,

some six weeks after the erection of the revolutionary tribunal, and is continued to the month of Vendémiaire of the year III. Written as it is, *currente calamo*, it is the most accurate diary of the scaffold which, I believe, can be found.

But nine months still separate us from the day when Charles Henri Sanson began to work in earnest; and during this lapse of time the guillotine was not altogether inactive. The Assembly had disappeared, and the King was abandoned to his own inspirations. On August 20, 1792, the Tuileries was invaded, and the King was made prisoner and incarcerated in the Temple. A revolutionary tribunal was instituted. This tribunal, although it numbered men like Fouquier-Tinville, used the guillotine with comparative moderation. It applied severe laws with severity; but it acted with justice, and respected the forms of law. It had chiefly to deal with common malefactors. From 1771 to 1792 the number of raids on persons and property considerably increased. Paper money, which was of recent creation, excited the cupidity of forgers. During a period of seven months, fifteen forgers were executed on the Place de Grève. On August 19, 1792, one Collot was condemned to death for forgery, and the guillotine was erected on the usual spot selected for executions. The Place de Grève was, as usual, well attended. As the cart, in which were Charles Henri Sanson and the culprit, drove up, a tremendous clamour greeted their appearance, and my grandfather distinguished a cry of 'To the Carrousel!'

The horse continued to advance; but a man seized the bridle and asked the driver why he did not obey the popular order. Charles Henri Sanson interposed; but the man declared that the will of the Commune was that the guillotine should henceforth be erected opposite the palace of the last King, and that he must immediately transfer his *tools* there.

My grandfather replied that his duty was to carry out the orders which were transmitted to him, and not to meet the wishes of the magistrates before they were expressed. But the clamour became more vociferous, and the horse's head was turned in the direction of the Tuileries. Charles Henri Sanson's position was very perplexing. He asked, and at length obtained, leave to drive up to the Hôtel-de-Ville to ask for instructions.

After some hesitation the Procureur of the Commune authorised my grandfather to act according to the wishes of the mob. The scaffold was taken down and transferred to the Place du Carrousel; and the cart repaired thither, escorted by the crowd.

But a considerable time elapsed before the guillotine could be erected again; and the culprit, who had hitherto been calm, began to struggle violently. As the carpenters had gone away, the people helped my grandfather to reconstruct the instrument of death. This reconstruction, however, progressed so slowly that night came on before it was finished, and my grandfather, apprehending desperate resistance on the part of the doomed man, requested some of those who worked around him to go to the Commune and ask for an

adjournment of the execution. The request was received with jeers of anger and derision, and public irritation became ominously threatening. A beardless young man, who wore the red cap, came forward, shrieking that my grandfather was a traitor, and that he should taste of the guillotine himself unless he 'operated' without more ado.

Charles Henri retorted with some warmth that he could not execute the culprit without special assistance.

'Your assistants are drunk!' exclaimed the young man. 'You can find as much help as you require here. The blood of aristocrats cements the happiness of the nation, and there is not one man in the crowd who is not ready to lend you a hand.'

A general cry of assent followed these words; but the circle around the scaffold became wider, and it appeared obvious that few were prepared to stand by their word. My grandfather perceived this, and hastened to prevent the first speaker from retreating by accepting his offer.

The culprit was led to the steps of the scaffold, which he refused to mount, and Charles Henri was obliged to take him in his arms and carry him up to the platform. When the unfortunate man saw the dark outline of the machine, his resistance became more desperate, and he shrieked for mercy. The crowd was now silent. The improvised executioner did not budge, but he was very pale. At last, after a final struggle, the culprit was strapped to the plank, but his contor-

tions were so violent that an assistant had to sit upon him.

Charles Henri Sanson now told the young man that he could not furnish a better proof of his patriotism than by taking a leading part in the execution; and he put in his hand the rope which communicated with the knife. At his bidding the young man gave a tug; the knife fell, and the head rolled in the basket.

This was not all; it was customary to show the head to the multitude after decapitation, and loud cries reminded my grandfather of the custom. He explained to the young man what he was to do, at the same time proposing himself to do the horrible duty. But his substitute refused; he took the head by the hair, and advanced to the edge of the scaffold; but as he was raising his arm to show the bloody trophy, he staggered and fell back. Charles Henri Sanson came to his assistance, thinking that he was fainting; but he discovered that he was dead. Violent emotion had brought on an apoplectic fit, which killed him instantaneously.

Such was the first execution that took place on the Place du Carrousel. Henceforth this place was the scene of every execution.

Defence, in those stormy times, was not less violent than attack. Royalist writers were as bitter as their adversaries of the patriotic party. Two journalists, Suleau and Durosoy, became especially conspicuous for the vehemence of their writings. The former was a man of action as well as a writer, and he had fought on

behalf of royalty on August 10. He was identified in the street by Théroigne de Méricourt, and at the instigation of that sanguinary amazon he was massacred by the mob. Durosoy's end was not less tragic. He was executed, and died with the greatest firmness. An officer named Collinot d'Augremont was his successor on the guillotine.

On August 29 Laporte, superintendent of the civil list, paid for the prodigalities of his royal master. Laporte was a venerable old man, and his death caused profound emotion among those who witnessed it. On the 31st Sellier and Desperriers were sentenced to death for issuing forged assignats, and beheaded on the same day.

The pillory had not followed the scaffold to the Place du Carrousel; it remained on the Grève. On September 1 my grandfather had to deal with one Jean Julien, sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment and to public exposure in the pillory, who excitedly protested that he was innocent. Hardly was he chained to the pillory than he exclaimed, '*Vive le Roi! Vive la Reine!*' These words produced the greatest excitement, and Julien would certainly have been massacred but for the prompt interference of the police. He was taken before the revoluntionary tribunal, sentenced to death, and executed on the following day.

No execution took place on September 3.

En revanche, there was a wholesale massacre, which it is not my business to speak of. While the massacre was taking place, the revolutionary tribunal was trying

Major Bachmann, a Swiss officer. The howls of the victims and the cries of the slaughterers could be heard, and frequently disturbed the audience. When the President passed sentence, Major Bachmann ran to join his friends who were being killed; but he was held back and reserved for the scaffold, on which he suffered the next day.

Old Cazotte, who, thanks to his daughter's devotion, had found mercy before the mock tribunal instituted at l'Abbaye, was less fortunate with the judges appointed by law. Cazotte was a graceful poet, whose mysticism sometimes verged on prophecy. One evening, in the Marchioness de Vaudreuil's drawing-room, he was seized with one of his habitual fits of sadness. When enquiries were made concerning his state of mind, he said that although he was awake he could see, as in a dream, things which filled him with terror; he spoke of prisons and executioners' carts, and he described the instrument of death which was to be invented twenty years afterwards. He added that he could see most of those who were present perishing by the executioner's hand.

A moment of silence followed this strange prediction; it was broken by Madame de Montmorency, who said laughing:

'You spoke of carts, my dear Monsieur Cazotte; let me hope that I shall be allowed to go to the scaffold in my own carriage.'

'Not so, Madame,' answered the visionnaire, 'for it shall be the last privilege accorded to the King of

France. You will be taken to the scaffold in a cart just like myself.'

Cazotte's singular vision was fully realised. He was arrested on August 25, sentenced to death and executed.

Executions were numerous up to the time of the King's death; but the number was considerably greater afterwards. The emigrants who fought in the ranks of the Prussian army, and were captured on the battle-field, suffered on the scaffold, together with a large party of ordinary miscreants, whose names it is not necessary to mention here.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DEATH OF LOUIS XVI.

THE King's death was the first signal for the struggle between the two factions which predominated in the Convention. The Gironde objected to the death of Louis XVI.; but the influence of the Montagne prevailed, and the monarch's appearance on the scaffold was the prelude to a series of wholesale executions. The people, too, was so infuriated that it frequently took the law into its own hands. Heads carried on pikes were often seen in the streets. Was the people, properly so called, wholly responsible for this cruelty? My grandfather was wont to tell us that he had often recognised gaol birds among the individuals who incited to murder, and he had no doubt that most of the outrages so frequently perpetrated were committed at the instigation of those ruffians.

Charles Henri Sanson was then living with his son (my father), who was twenty-seven years of age; and his style of life was so quiet and secluded that on August 10 he was not even aware that the Tuileries had been attacked and devastated by the people. On that day my father went to breakfast with his uncle, Louis Cyr

Charlemagne Sanson. I cannot do better than allow him to describe what occurred on the occasion.

'After breakfast,' he writes, 'I had opened the window to air the room. I looked out and saw a crowd in the street, but, as the apartment was on the fourth floor, I could not see distinctly what was taking place. However, I espied a young fellow who was raising in the air something stuck on a pole. My aunt, who was also looking out, hastily retreated, exclaiming:

'"Good heavens, it is a head!"

'This exclamation filled us with fear, and we felt the more anxious to know what had happened. But before we could get any information a larger crowd rushed down the street in pursuit of a young man, who, as we perceived, was a Swiss guard of the Poissonnière barracks.

'The fugitive had a good start, and was anxiously looking about for a means of escape. I confess that both myself and my uncle were rather rash; but we could not resist our first impulse of compassion. I told my uncle that we could not allow a man to be massacred before our very door; and, in spite of the advice of those who had breakfasted with us, we hastily went down and opened the door.

'"What do you want to do with this young man?" said I to some of those who gave chase.

'"But, sir," answered one, "the Swiss guards are being killed."

'"For what reason?"

'"Why, don't you know?"

"All I know is that this man has done you no harm, and that you want to murder him."

"While we were thus parleying, the Switzer had retreated behind us. Two men tried to seize him, but I held them back; my uncle pushed the fugitive into the hall, and I was enabled to shut the door in the faces of the pursuers.

"The house was situate in the Rue Beauregard, and communicated with a butcher's shop in the Rue de Cléry. We escaped through these premises, and at the soldier's request we took him to the guard-house of the Bonne-Nouvelle section, which was then the Rue de Bourbon-Villeneuve, near the Cour des Miracles. We then returned home, escorted by twelve armed men, who easily dispersed the crowd which had gathered before our house. It was from our escort that we heard of the events which had taken place at the Tuileries on the same morning.

"The day which had so tragically begun, ended with an amusing incident. On our return, we found one of our relatives, who had just come from the country to pass a few days in Paris. The poor man was so frightened that he wanted to leave Paris without delay. But when he tried to depart, he found that the gates of the town had just been closed, and that no one could leave Paris without submitting to certain formalities, which increased our visitor's apprehensions. He gave way to the most ludicrous despair, tore his hair, cursed his own imprudence, and could only be appeased by my promising to provide for him a means of escape far more dangerous than

the formalities after which he might have quietly left Paris.

'I was acquainted with one of my grandfather Jugier's old friends, who had a garden which extended beyond the precincts of the town. Our timorous friend effected his escape by this opening, previously taking care to disguise himself as a gardener.

'Up to this time neither I nor my father had attended very regularly the meetings of our section, and we had not been incorporated in the National Guard; but on the following day (August 11) two delegates of the section came to invite us to attend, and we were compelled to obey. One of these delegates was an old schoolfellow of mine, who had hitherto been in ignorance of my origin, and I was in fear that he would discard me. Far from doing so, however, he strove to convince me that he did not share the common prejudice with regard to my family.

'This first meeting of the Assembly was not marked by any interesting event; but on the following day a deputation of twelve members, of which I was one, was appointed to protest against the intrusion of an individual who had obtained the suffrages of the inhabitants of the district as member of the Commune by deceiving them.

'We went to the Hôtel-de-Ville, where the Commune was sitting, and the president of our deputation, a barrister of the name of Jacob, handed to the secretary a copy of the resolution of our section, which explained the object of our visit. When his turn came to support

this resolution, he was interrupted by Chaumette, who said that he as well as Robespierre knew the individual alluded to, that they had seen him enter the carriage in which the King, the Queen, and the royal family had been taken to the Temple prison, and that this was a sufficient proof of patriotism. Chaumette was not content with impeaching us; he also spoke of our section as a centre of aristocracy, and he described our deputation as a shameful cabal against a virtuous citizen.

'While this discussion was going on I was placed in a dangerous predicament. Being unable to find room in the hall with my colleagues, I sat down near strangers, among whom were some of the professional slaughterers who were constantly in quest of victims. Chaumette had hardly finished when Robespierre called an usher and said to him:

'"Tell the President that I wish to speak."

'At the same moment, as I did not appear to belong to the deputation, several sinister-looking men eyed me, and one of them said:

'"What are you doing here? I suppose you are one of the aristocrats? We'll just 'do' for you as we did for the Swiss soldiers."

'These threatening words frightened me, and I confess that I could not refrain from showing it. I nevertheless answered as firmly as I could:

'"Citizens, you have a curious way of settling questions. You had better learn who I am before you try to murder me."

'"Bah!" exclaimed another man; "we should never get rid of these ruffianly aristocrats if we listened to what they say."

'I looked around, sadly perplexed, and was fortunate enough to catch the eye of the schoolfellow I have already spoken of. He perceived my position, and, coming up to me, he said that I was wanted by the secretary of the Commune. We were allowed to go away; I re-entered the hall by another door, and joined my colleagues, whose fate, whatever it might be, it was my duty to share.

'Robespierre was speaking when I entered. He entirely concurred with Chaumette, so that he seemed to grant us our lives when we were ignominiously dismissed; and we had the greatest difficulty in finding the staircase amidst the people who crowded to look at us.

'When we emerged from the Hôtel-de-Ville we could no longer restrain our indignation at the shameful manner in which we had been treated, and we resolved to go immediately to our section, to report upon what had occurred. The section was sitting when we arrived; and hardly had our president described the result of our mission than the meeting rose *en masse* asking for revenge. It was immediately agreed that the section should be called to arms, and every one prepared for the emergency.

'We had four pieces of cannon. Our artillerymen brought them out, and in less than two hours over two thousand men were ready to attack the Commune,

to ask for redress for the insult inflicted on the delegates of the section. Every man was at his post; the artillery came first, and the soldiers and officers after; and we were about to march forward when four citizens, sent by the Commune to apologise for what had occurred, appeared. We listened to them at first with some attention; but one of the speakers having expressed himself in somewhat haughty terms, our president interrupted him, and spoke severely of the treatment our deputation had received, and of the danger to which they had thereby been exposed. The delegates were silent; they at length asked to be allowed to report to the Commune what they had heard and seen. This was agreed to; but it was stipulated that Chaumette and Robespierre should publicly retract, on the very next day, and in the presence of the deputation, the insulting assertions they had made. The delegates promised that it should be so, and retired.

'The promise was discharged on the following day. Our deputation returned to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and, in the presence of nearly twelve hundred persons of all classes, Robespierre, Chaumette, and the President of the Commune admitted that they had been deceived with regard to the inhabitants of the section of the Northern Suburb; that they had since ascertained that they were excellent patriots. A copy of the report of the sitting was at once delivered to us, and we peacefully returned to our section, which was awaiting in arms the result of this second expedition.'

I have thought proper to quote the above incidents

just as my father related them in order to show what the situation of Paris was when the sentence on the unfortunate Louis XVI. was pronounced. It would have been impossible to find anywhere else a more complete state of anarchy; for what condition could be worse than that of a city in which civil war was so imminent between two districts armed with musket and cannon?

When the election of officers took place, my father and my grandfather were elected sergeants, and my grand-uncle, Charlemagne Sanson, corporal. This obliged them to take a more active part than they might have wished in the political manifestations which took place during this strange epoch. A short time had elapsed since these grades had been conferred upon them when the Convention began to consider the fate of the royal prisoner of the Temple. This bloody page of our history has been so often expatiated upon that it needs no repetition. It is only the last act of the drama which I have to relate, and I feel the task is sufficiently heavy.[1]

It was on December 11, 1792, that the monarch appeared before the Convention, then presided over by Barrère, whose cold and trenchant eloquence was to exercise a decisive influence on the final vote. Sentence was passed on January 17. The surprise caused by the result was so great that the votes were counted a second time; but on the following day it was ascertained beyond doubt that the sentence passed upon Louis Capet was death.

[1] The translator has suppressed here, as elsewhere, a great deal of irrelevant matter.

My grandfather heard the news on the 19th. On the 20th he was to celebrate the twenty-ninth anniversary of his marriage. The celebration was a mournful one. In the evening Charles Henri and his son went out. They learned that the King had asked for a delay of three days to prepare himself for death, and that the petition had been refused; and Charles Henri, having gone as far as the legislative palace, was positively assured that the only favour granted to the King of France was a final meeting with his family and the assistance of a priest of his religion. It was therefore certain that the execution had been appointed for the following day.

My grandfather returned home in a melancholy mood. He found an order, which had been sent to him, to erect a scaffold and to expect the convict at eight o'clock in the morning. Other papers brought during his absence were letters by which he was apprised that measures were taken to save the King during his progress from the Temple to the Place de la Révolution, and that, if my grandfather offered the slightest resistance, he would be killed. Other letters begged and did not threaten. He was asked to join the saviours of the victim, and to delay the execution as much as possible so as to give time for a number of resolute men to break through the ranks of the militia and carry off the King.

This last means, which my grandfather regarded as neither impossible nor unlikely, was the only one which left him a ray of hope.

On the following day, at dawn, my grandfather and my father were roused by the sound of the drums which were calling out the section, each district having to furnish a battalion for the execution. My father belonged to the battalion selected in our neighbourhood for the unpleasant duty. He was not sorry for it, because it enabled him to share with his father the perils of the day. He therefore put on his uniform and went out with Charles Henri Sanson, who was supported by Charlemagne and another of his brothers. At this stage, I cannot do better than let my grandfather speak for himself and give his own version of the events which followed:

'The sacrifice is accomplished! . . . I started this morning at seven o'clock, after embracing my poor wife, whom I did not expect to see again. I took a fly with my brothers Charlemagne and Louis Martin. The crowd was so large in the streets that it was close upon nine o'clock before we reached the Place de la Révolution. Gros and Barré, my assistants, had erected the guillotine, and I was so persuaded that it would not be used that I hardly looked at it. My brothers were well armed, and so was I; under our coats we had, besides our swords, daggers, four pistols, and a flask of powder, and our pockets were full of bullets. We felt sure that some attempt would be made to rescue the King, and we intended, if we could, to assist in saving his life.

'When we reached the Place I looked about for

my son, and I discovered him at a short distance with his battalion. He nodded, and seemed to encourage me. I listened intently for some indication as to what was about to occur. I rejoiced at the thought that the King had perhaps been rescued on the way, and that he was already beyond the reach of danger. As, however, my eyes were bent in the direction of the Madeleine, I suddenly espied a body of cavalry which was coming up at a trot, and, immediately after it, a carriage drawn by two horses and surrounded by a double row of horsemen followed. No doubt could now exist; the victim was at hand. My sight became dim, and I looked at my son; he also was deadly pale.

'The carriage stopped at the foot of the scaffold. The King was sitting on the back seat on the right; next to him was his confessor, and on the front seat two gendarmes. The latter came down first; then the priest stepped out, and he was directly followed by the King, who appeared even more collected and calm than when I saw him at Versailles and in the Tuileries.

'As he approached the steps of the scaffold I cast a last glance around. The people were silent, the drums were sounding, and not the slightest sign of a rescue being at hand was given. Charlemagne was as troubled as I was; as to my brother Martin, he was younger and had more firmness. He advanced respectfully, took off his hat, and told the King that he must take his coat off.

'"There is no necessity," answered he; "despatch me as I am now."

'My brother insisted, and added that it was indispensably necessary to bind his hands.

'This last observation moved him greatly. He reddened, and exclaimed, "What! would you dare to touch me? Here is my coat, but do not lay a finger on me!"

'After saying this he took off his coat. Charlemagne came to Martin's assistance, and, scarcely knowing how to address the illustrious victim, he said in a cold tone, which could hardly conceal his profound emotion, "It is absolutely necessary. The execution cannot proceed otherwise."

'In my turn I interfered, and bending to the ear of the priest, "Monsieur l'Abbé," I said, "ask the King to submit. While I tie his hands we can gain time, and perhaps some assistance may be forthcoming."

'The abbé looked sadly and eagerly in my face, and then addressing the King: "Sire," said he, "submit to this last sacrifice, which shall make you look more like our Saviour."

'The King held out his hands, while his confessor was presenting a crucifix to his lips. Two assistants tied the hands which had wielded a sceptre. He then ascended the steps of the scaffold, supported by the worthy priest. "Are these drums going to sound for ever?" he said to Charlemagne. On reaching the platform, he advanced to the side where the crowd was the thickest, and made such an imperative sign that the drummers stopped for a moment.

'"Frenchmen!" he exclaimed, in a strong voice,

"you see your King ready to die for you. May my blood cement your happiness! I die innocent of what I am charged with!"

'He was about to continue when Santerre, who was at the head of his staff, ordered the drummers to beat, and nothing more could be heard.

'In a moment he was bound to the weigh-plank, and a few seconds afterwards, while under my touch the knife was sliding down, he could still hear the voice of the priest pronouncing these words:

'"Son of Saint-Louis, ascend to Heaven!"

'Thus died the unfortunate prince, who might have been saved by a thousand well armed men; and really I am at loss to understand the notice which I received the day before the execution, that some attempt at rescue was to be made. The slightest signal would have been sufficient to cause a diversion in his favour; for if when Gros, my assistant, showed the King's head to the multitude some cries of triumph were uttered, the greater part of the crowd turned away with profound horror.'

Such is the account which my grandfather left us of the death of Louis XVI. It is in conformity with the letter which he had the courage to write to the 'Thermomètre du Jour,' to correct some erroneous allegations contained in that paper.

The narrative I have just given essentially differs from that of M. de Lamartine in his 'Histoire des Girondins;' but, however great may be the authority of the eminent historian, his account cannot, for accuracy,

be compared with my grandfather's. He has seen fit to represent Charles Henri as speaking contemptuously to the King, and even raising his hand to strike him. This is a gross fabrication, and I need not take the trouble to show its absurdity.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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MEMOIRS OF THE SANSONS

From Private Notes and Documents.

[1688–1847.]

EDITED BY

HENRY SANSON,

LATE EXECUTIONER OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE OF PARIS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

London:
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MEMOIRS OF THE SANSONS.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AN EXPIATORY MASS.

THE death of Louis XVI. profoundly disturbed Charles Henri Sanson. I do not know whether I have shown this extraordinary man in sufficient relief. Charles Henri was a true descendant of his stoical grandmother. He had been imbued with her ideas and principles, and believed in the legitimacy of his profession and social mission. He regarded himself as invested with stern and painful, yet withal necessary, functions. This conviction had given him enough strength and courage to discharge duties which, I have every reason to believe, clashed with his natural disposition. His sense of duty had, however, been confirmed by forty years' experience. At times the cruelty of certain punishments, as in the case of Damiens, had slightly shaken his strong faith; but a sentiment of obedience prevailed in the end, and his scruples vanished before the certainty that the judges were responsible for the sentences which he, as their blind instrument, carried out.

With such a theory he could not but regard the

reprobation in which his functions were held as a prejudice of the worst description: hence his petitions to Parliament and the National Assembly. I may add that, in the case of the latter tribunal, my grandfather was so dissatisfied with the arguments suggested against his plea, that he immediately wrote the following letter to the members of the National Assembly:

'Gentlemen,—For a long time the executioners of criminal judgments have complained of the injustice of a prejudice which partly awards to them the disgrace of the crimes which justice punishes through their instrumentality. They have hitherto suffered the humiliation, and found sufficient consolation in their consciences. It is now attempted to sanction this prejudice by declaring them unfit to hold civil rights. Such is, at least, the intention expressed by the Abbé Maury in the sitting of the 23rd of the present month.

'The Abbé Maury's motion has caused us considerable alarm, and we are convinced that justice must be deprived of its executive strength if the motion is carried.

'The executioner of Paris, Charles Henri Sanson, who hereby presents to you his most respectful remonstrances, declares (and all his *confrères* will follow his example) that he will tender his resignation if you declare that executioners are not citizens.

'The petitioner trusts that you will deign to examine the question with the attention it deserves. At a time when justice prevails, you will not suffer it to be overlooked.

'(Signed) SANSON,

'Executioner of criminal sentences in the town of Paris.'

I said before that the Assembly gave no decision respecting the petition presented by the executioners. The Assembly allowed the decree to stand as it had been previously worded, thus leaving the executioners to infer that they had gained their point. They were, in fact, henceforth treated as citizens; and we have seen my grandfather and father in the meetings of their sections and holding grades in the National Guard.

Such had been, up to the death of the King, Charles Henri Sanson's feelings concerning what he styled the honour of his profession. The blood which flowed freely under the Convention altered his sentiments. Seeing an edifice he had been taught to respect falling, he began to doubt whether he had a right to believe in the scaffold after the overthrow of the throne; whether the destruction of royalty did not call for the abolition of the office of executioner. These doubts especially harassed him on the night that preceded the execution of the King. His state of mind can easily be imagined when it is remembered that he had sympathy for Louis XVI. More than once he thought of running away; but thereby he would have exposed his family to great danger.

On January 21 my grandfather, who seldom left his home except when he was obliged, only spent a few moments with his wife and children. He came to see them after the execution, and then hurried away and returned after midnight. My grandmother was becoming very uneasy at his absence when Chesneau, who

was still living under Charles Henri Sanson's roof, told her that his old friend had asked him the address of an aged priest and two nuns he knew, and that he had probably gone to see them. My grandmother understood the object of such a visit. She knew her husband's religious feelings, and guessed that, in spite of the perils and difficulties of the adventure, he was in quest of a remedy for his troubled conscience.

Charles Henri Sanson returned at two o'clock in the morning, and before his friends had time to question him, he said :

'Chesneau, I have seen your *protégés*. It is bitterly cold. You must take some provisions to them tomorrow. You will provide them with victuals every week. But I do not want you to say whence these provisions come.—I have seen two nuns who are very miserable, my dear Mary,' he added, turning to my grandmother ; 'if you can give them some clothing you will do them a good turn and oblige me.'

Charles Henri Sanson retired after giving the above explanation of his absence. On the following day he related to his wife that he had found in a miserable hut of La Villette a priest who had escaped from the massacres of the Carmelites, and two nuns who had been driven away from their convent; that the priest had promised him that he would celebrate a mass, far less for the repose of the soul of the King than for the peace of his (Sanson's) conscience.

The secret of this expiatory mass was kept during the remainder of my grandfather's life; but after his

death, my grandmother and my father, believing that the anecdote would redound to his credit, related it to some of their friends. It came to the knowledge of an illustrious writer, Honoré de Balzac, who begged my father to confirm its authenticity. His behest was granted, and, with the help of the additional elements furnished to him by my father, he wrote the following moving account:[1]

Towards the end of the month of January 1793 an old lady was descending the incline which leads to the St. Laurent Church, in the Faubourg St. Martin. It was about eight o'clock in the evening. Snow had fallen in the morning, so that the sound of footsteps could hardly be heard. It was very cold. The streets were lonely, and the natural fear inspired by the silence that prevailed was intensified by the terror which, at the time, was pervading the whole of France. The old lady had met no one. Her weak sight was even unable to detect in the distance, by the light of the lanterns, a few loiterers scattered like shadows along the immense thoroughfare. She was fearlessly crossing this solitude, as if old age were a talisman which could preserve her from any mishap.

After she had passed the Rue des Morts she thought she could detect the heavy and firm step of a man behind her. The idea that she was followed frightened her, and she stepped forward more briskly, so as to reach a well-lighted shop, hoping then to descry her

[1] This account has been reprinted in the edition of Balzac's complete works.

follower. As soon as she reached the first ray of horizontal light which issued from the shop, she suddenly turned round and saw a man whose form she could but just discern through the fog. The indistinct vision was enough for her. She tottered under the terror wherewith she was filled; for she did not doubt that she had been followed by the stranger ever since she had left her abode. The desire to escape from her silent persecutor gave her strength, and, without reasoning, she went faster, as if she could get out of the reach of a man who, obviously, could easily keep up with her. After running for a few minutes, she reached a pastrycook's shop, rushed in, and fell, rather than sat down, on a chair before the counter.

As she entered, a young woman who was darning looked up. Recognising the old-fashioned shape of a violet silk cloak which covered the old lady's shoulders, she hastened to open a drawer, as if to take out something she was to remit to her. The young woman's gesture and face betrayed a desire to get rid of the unknown as soon as possible, as if she had been one of those persons whom it is no pleasure to meet. She made a gesture of impatience on finding the drawer empty, and, without looking at the lady, she hurriedly left the counter, entered the back shop, and called her husband, who suddenly appeared.

'Where have you put ——?' she asked with an air of mystery, designating the old lady by a glance.

She did not finish her query. Although the pastrycook could only see the large black silk cap, adorned

with bows of violet ribbon, he disappeared, after looking at his wife in a manner which seemed to signify:

'Do you think I am stupid enough to leave it on your counter?'

Astonished at the silence and stillness of the old lady, the woman returned to her; and, upon looking at her, she was seized with compassion, or rather with curiosity.

Although the unknown lady's face was naturally livid, as that of a person addicted to austere habits, it was easy to see that some recent emotion had overcast it with extraordinary pallor. Her head gear was so contrived as to conceal her hair, doubtless silvered by age; for the cleanliness of her collar showed that she did not wear powder. Absence of any ornament gave her an appearance of religious severity. Her features were grave and proud. In former times the manners and habits of the upper class were so different from those belonging to other classes that it was easy to recognise a person of birth. The young woman was therefore convinced that the unknown was a *ci-devant*, and that she formerly belonged to the Court.

'Madam,' said she, instinctively and with respect, forgetting that this appellation was prohibited.

But the old lady made no answer. Her eyes were fixed on the panes of the shop, as if she saw a frightful apparition behind them.

'What is the matter with you, citoyenne?' enquired the master of the house, reappearing and calling the old lady's attention by handing her a small cardboard box wrapped in blue paper.

'Nothing—nothing, friends,' she answered, in a soft voice.

She looked up and thanked the pastrycook; but on perceiving the red cap he wore, she uttered a scream.

'You have betrayed me!'

The young woman and her husband answered with a gesture of horror which brought a blush to the unknown lady's countenance.

'Excuse me,' she said, with childish gentleness. Then taking a louis from her pocket, she presented it to the pastrycook.

'Here is the price you mentioned.'

There is a kind of poverty which the poor alone can guess. The pastrycook and his wife looked at each other, pointing to the old woman, and exchanged the same thought. This louis was probably the last she had. Her hands trembled when she offered it. She looked at it intently, but without avarice. Fasting and hardship were as visibly imprinted on her features as fear and ascetic habits. In her dress could be detected vestiges of splendour—worn-out silk; a clean although faded cloak; carefully mended lace, rags of opulence. The tradesman and his wife, hesitating between pity and love of gain, began by allaying their consciences in kind words.

'But, citoyenne, you seem very faint.'

'Would madam take something?' exclaimed the wife, interrupting her husband.

'We have some excellent broth,' said the pastrycook.

'It is so cold.—Madam was probably taken unwell when she came, but you can remain here and warm yourself.'

Encouraged by these kind expressions, the lady admitted that she had been followed by a man, and was afraid to return home alone.

'Is that all? Wait a moment, citoyenne!' said the man with the red cap.

He handed the louis to his wife, and impelled by the peculiar gratitude that fills a tradesman when he receives an exorbitant price for merchandise of moderate value, he retired, put on his uniform of National Guardsman, took up his hat and his musket, and reappeared.

But his wife had had time to reflect, and reflection drove away her compassion. Fearful that her husband should meddle with some mysterious and dangerous business, she tried to pull him by his coat-tail; but the pastrycook had already offered to escort the old lady.

'The man who followed the lady is still lurking around the shop,' exclaimed the young woman.

'I think he is,' candidly answered the old lady.

'Perhaps he is a spy! There may be some conspiracy! Don't go;—and take the box away from her.'

These words whispered in the pastrycook's ear by his wife deprived him of the slight courage he already possessed.

'I'll go and speak to him, and get rid of him directly!' cried the pastrycook, rushing into the street.

The old lady, as passive as a child, and quite bewildered, sat down again.

The honest tradesman soon returned. His face, which was naturally red and inflamed by the heat of his oven, had suddenly turned pale, and he was so terrified that his legs shook like those of a drunkard.

'Do you want to get us guillotined, you aristocrat?' he shrieked furiously, and with a thick utterance. 'Show us your heels—never come here again, and don't expect that I'll ever furnish you with elements of conspiracy.'

And the pastrycook tried to gain possession of the small box, which the lady had thrust into one of her pockets.

Hardly had the man's trembling hands touched her clothes than the unknown, preferring the dangers of the street, with God as her only protection, to the loss of that which she had just purchased, recovered the activity of her youth. She sprang to the door, opened it and disappeared, to the amazement of her trembling aggressors.

The unknown walked on quickly, but her momentary vigour soon collapsed. She could hear the spy, who was still following her, and whose step cracked on the snow which he pressed down under his heavy feet. She was obliged to stop. He stopped also. She dared neither to look at him nor to speak to him, either out of fear or of inability to find words. She then resumed her way with a slower step, and he slackened his progress so as to remain at a reasonable distance. He seemed to be the old woman's very shadow. The church clock was striking nine when the silent couple passed again before St. Laurent.

But it is in the nature of the soul, even in the most infirm, that calmness should follow a fit of violent agitation. It was probably due to this that the unknown lady, receiving no harm at the hands of her supposed persecutor, imagined that he was a secret friend who merely wished to afford her protection. She remembered all the circumstances which had attended the stranger's appearance, as if to find support for this consoling opinion; and thus she began to think that his intentions were good. Forgetting the terror evinced at his sight by the pastrycook, she advanced with a firm step along the higher regions of the Faubourg St. Martin.

After half an hour's walk, she reached a house situate near the cross formed by the principal street of the faubourg and the road which leads to the gate of Pantin. This place was one of the most lonely in Paris. The wind, passing over the Buttes-Chaumont and Belleville, hissed between the houses, or rather the huts, scattered in this desolate vale. No blackness could be more discouraging than that which pervaded this spot, which seemed the natural refuge of poverty and despair. The man who relentessly pursued the poor creature who was bold enough to traverse these dark and deserted parts, appeared struck with the sight. He stopped, thoughtful and hesitant. The faint light of a lantern, dimly shining through the fog, revealed his form but imperfectly; but fear improved the old woman's sight; and as she imagined that the man's face was sinister, her terror returned. Whilst her pursuer was still hesitating, she glided, in the shadow, towards the

door of the solitary house, turned the lock, and disappeared with marvellous rapidity.

The man was still motionless, looking at the house. It had the aspect of the buildings which give so miserable an appearance to the suburbs of Paris. It looked so dilapidated that a gust of wind, to all appearance, might have scattered it. The brown tiles of the roof, covered with moss, seemed ready to sink under the weight of the snow. Each landing had three windows, so rotten and antiquated that the wind freely entered the rooms. The general appearance of the old house was that of a tower of which the elements were achieving the overthrow. A faint light could be seen through the three upper windows, and the remainder of the house was plunged in complete darkness.

It was not without effort that the old woman ascended the steep and broken staircase, along which ran a rope in lieu of balustrade. She gave a gentle tap at the door of the upper apartment, and sat down in the chair which an old man hastened to present to her.

'Hide yourself—quick!' said she, breathlessly; 'for, although we do not often go out, our refuge is discovered and our steps are tracked.'

'What is the matter?' enquired another old woman, who was seated near the fire.

'The man who has been lurking about the house for the last few days, followed me this evening.'

At these words the three inhabitants of the garret looked at each other with every token of profound terror. The old man was the least agitated, perhaps

because he was in greater peril than his female companions. When a brave man labours under a great misfortune, or feels under the yoke of constant persecution, he submits to impending death, considering his days of respite as so many victories gained over fate.

The two women's looks were directed towards the old man, and showed that he was the only cause of their fear.

'Why should you not confide in God, my sisters?' he said, in a low but unctuous voice. 'We sang His praises amidst the cries uttered by the murderers and the murdered in the Convent of Carmelites. If it was His will that I should be saved, it was doubtless to provide for me a fate which I am bound to accept without a murmur. God protects His ministers, and can act with them as He likes. You must think of yourselves, not of me.'

'Nay, do not say so,' exclaimed the two old women.

'I considered myself as dead from the day on which I left the Abbey of Chelles,' cried the one of the two nuns who was sitting near the fire.

'Here is the Host,' said the other, handing to the priest the small box she had found so much trouble in procuring.

'But,' she cried, 'I hear a step on the staircase!'

At these words all three listened. The noise subsided.

'Do not be frightened,' said the priest, 'if some one tries to enter. A person on whose fidelity we can reckon is preparing to cross the frontier, and will take the letters I have written to the Duke de Lorges

and the Marquis de Béthune, in which I beg them to think of the means of removing you from this horrible country—from death and misery, which are our constant attendants.'

'Will you not come with us, then?' asked the nuns with a kind of despair.

'My place is among victims!' said the priest with simplicity.

They remained silent, eyeing their companion with admiration.

'Sister Martha,' said he to the nun who had brought the Host, 'the envoy I was speaking of is to answer *Fiat voluntas* to the word *Hosannah*.'

'Some one is coming up the stairs!' exclaimed the other nun, opening a place of concealment cleverly built under the roof.

This time it was easy to hear, amidst profound silence, the steps of a man striking against pieces of hard mud which covered the stairs. The priest hastily entered a kind of cupboard, and the nun threw some clothes over him.

'You can close the cupboard now, Sister Agatha,' said he, in a low voice.

Hardly was the priest out of sight when three raps at the door startled the two poor creatures. They looked at each other without daring to utter a word.

Construing their silence in his own way, the man who was knocking pushed open the door and suddenly appeared. The two nuns shuddered when they recognised the person who for the last five or six days had been

lurking around the house. They moved not, and eyed him with uneasy curiosity, in the manner of shy children who silently observe strangers.

The man was of middle height and rather portly; but nothing in his demeanour or in his face indicated malignity. He neither advanced nor spoke, but examined the room. Two straw mats, stretched out on the floor, were the only couch of the nuns. There was a table in the middle of the room. Thereon was placed a brass candlestick, a few plates, three knives, and a round loaf. The fire was not of the brightest, and a few pieces of wood, heaped up in a corner, showed the poverty of the inmates. The walls, which were painted over, betrayed the decrepid state of the roof, for brownish stains showed that water trickled down from above. A relic, saved probably from the sack of the Abbey of Chelles, was deposited on the mantelpiece. The remainder of the furniture consisted of three chairs, two boxes, and an old chest of drawers. A door near the mantelpiece indicated that there was another room on the same floor.

This enumeration was made in a few seconds by the stranger who had appeared under such sinister auspices. A feeling of compassion was visible on his countenance, and he looked benevolently upon the two women. He seemed at least as embarrassed as they were, and the pause which followed lasted a full minute. At length the visitor perceived the moral weakness and inexperience of the poor creatures, and he said to them in a voice of which he tried to soften the tone:

'I do not come here as an enemy, sisters. If some misfortune were to happen to you, do not attribute any share of it to me. I have a favour to ask.'

They remained silent.

'If I annoy you—if I cause you any inconvenience—speak fearlessly, I will retire; but know that I am entirely devoted to you, and that if I can be of any service you can employ me without fear.'

There was such an accent of truth in these words that Sister Agatha, who belonged to the family of Béthune, and whose manners seemed to indicate that in former days she had known the gaiety of fêtes and breathed the atmosphere of the Court, pointed to a chair, as if inviting the speaker to sit down. The unknown manifested a kind of joy not unmingled with sadness, when he understood the gesture; and he waited until the two nuns themselves were seated before he accepted the invitation.

'You have given shelter,' he resumed, 'to a venerable priest, who miraculously escaped from the massacre of the Carmelites.'

'*Hosannah!*' exclaimed Sister Agatha, interrupting the stranger.

'That is not his name, I think,' answered he.

'But, sir, we have no priest here,' said Sister Martha, 'and——'

'You should be more careful,' continued the stranger, in a gentle tone; and he stretched out his hand and took up a breviary. 'You do not know Latin, and——'

He stopped, for the extraordinary emotion which appeared on the features of the two nuns showed him that he was going too far. They trembled and their eyes were full of tears.

'Be reassured,' said the unknown visitor, with a frank voice. 'I know the name of your guest and yours also. Five days ago I heard of your distress, and of your devotion to the venerable Abbé de——'

'Hush!' said Sister Agatha, with candour, putting up a finger.

'You may perceive, sisters, that if I had the horrible intention of betraying you, I might have done so ere this.'

Hearing these words, the priest emerged from his hiding-place and advanced towards the stranger.

'I cannot believe, sir,' said he to him, 'that you are one of our persecutors, and I do not distrust you. What do you want?'

The priest's simple manner and the noble expression of his features might have disarmed even assassins. The mysterious individual who had given animation to this scene of misery looked for a few moments at the group formed by these three beings, and, assuming a tone of confidence, he spoke to the priest in the following terms:

'Father, I came to beseech you to say a mass for the repose of the soul of a person whose body—whose body shall never be buried in hallowed ground.'

The priest shuddered; and the nuns, not understanding yet what the stranger wanted, remained, with outstretched necks, in an attitude of curiosity.

The priest scanned the stranger's features. Evident anxiety could be seen there, and his looks were humble and beseeching.

'Well,' answered the priest, 'return at midnight: I shall then be ready to celebrate the only funeral service we can offer in expiation of crime.'

The stranger started; but a gentle and grave satisfaction overspread his features, and, after bowing respectfully to the old priest and to the nuns, he disappeared, manifesting a kind of silent gratitude which was understood by these generous souls.

The stranger returned two hours after, and, after discreetly knocking at the door, he was introduced by Mdlle. de Charost. She led him to the second room on the same landing, where everything was prepared for the ceremony.

Between two shafts the nuns had placed the old chest of drawers, of which the old-fashioned shape was concealed by an altar-covering of green moire. A large crucifix of ebony and ivory, attached to the yellow wall, showed off the nudity of the room and attracted the eyes. Four small thin tapers which the sisters had fixed with yellow wax upon this improvised altar furnished a pale and flickering light. These tapers hardly lighted the other parts of the room, but it made the holy objects discernible, and thereby looked like rays descending from Heaven on this unadorned altar. The floor was damp. The roof, which steeply descended on both sides, as is usual in garrets, was cracked, and an icy wind penetrated through the openings. Nothing could

be less pompous, and yet never, perhaps, was anything more impressive than this gloomy ceremony. Profound silence overcast the scene with a kind of dark majesty; and the grandeur of the act so strongly contrasted with the poverty of the display that a sentiment of religious awe prevailed.

The two old nuns were kneeling on either side of the altar, and, regardless of the dampness of the floor, they joined in the prayers of the priest who, clad in his pontifical vestments, was holding up a gold pyx studded with precious stones—a sacred vase saved, no doubt, from the pillage of the Abbey of Chelles. Then, next to this pyx, the wine and the water reserved for the holy sacrifice were contained in two glasses scarcely worthy of the lowest wine-shop. As he had no missal, the priest had placed his breviary on a corner of the altar. A common plate was provided for the laving of the innocent and bloodless hands. Everything was immense though small, poor though noble, profane and holy at the same time.

The stranger piously kneeled between the two nuns; but, suddenly perceiving a crape around the pyx and the crucifix, he was assailed by a recollection so painful that drops trickled down his brow.

The four silent actors in this scene looked at each other mysteriously; and then their souls, acting in unison, exchanged their religious sentiments, and joined with each other in religious commiseration.

It seemed as if their thoughts had evoked the martyr whose remains had been devoured by quicklime,

and as if his shadow was before them in all its majesty. They celebrated an *Obit*, without the body of the defunct. Under these tiles and disjointed rafters four Christians were about to intercede with God for a King of France, and to go through the funeral service without his coffin. It was the purest of devotions, an astonishing act of faithfulness accomplished without fear. The whole Monarchy was there, in the prayer of a priest and two poor women; and perhaps the Revolution was also represented by this man, whose face betrayed too much remorse not to make believe that he was actuated by boundless repentance.

Instead of pronouncing the Latin words *introibo ad altare Dei*, &c., the priest, by a divine inspiration, looked at his three companions who represented Christian France, and said to them:

'Let us enter God's sanctuary!'

At these words, uttered with impressive softness, the stranger and the two nuns were seized with religious awe. God could not have appeared more majestic under the cupola of St. Peter's at Rome than He then appeared to these Christians in this refuge of misery.

The stranger's fervour was sincere. The sentiment which united the prayers of these four servants of God and the King was unanimous. The holy words sounded like celestial music. When the *Pater noster* was said, tears came to the stranger's eyes. To this prayer the priest added, 'And forgive the regicides as Louis XVI. himself forgave them.'

The two nuns saw two large tears rolling down the

stranger's manly cheeks. The mass for the dead was recited. The *Domine salvum fac regem*, sung in a low voice, moved these faithful Royalists. They thought that the child King on whose behalf they were imploring was in the hands of his enemies.

When the service was terminated, the priest made a sign to the two nuns, who retired. As soon as he was alone with the stranger, he went up to him with a gentle and paternal air, and said to him, sadly:

'My son, if you dipped your hands in the blood of the King, confide in me—there is no fault that cannot be forgiven by a repentance so sincere and so touching as yours.'

At the priest's first words, the stranger made a movement indicating terror; but he regained his self-possession, and looking calmly at the astonished ecclesiastic:

'Father,' said he, 'none is more innocent of the crime than I am.'

'I am bound to believe you!' said the priest.

There was a pause, during which he examined his penitent. Then, still believing him to be one of those timorous members of the Convention who sacrificed a royal head in order to preserve their own, he observed in a grave voice: 'Remember, my son, that it is not enough not to have taken part in this great crime to be absolved. Those who could defend the King and moved not a finger in his defence, shall have a heavy account to answer for before the King of Heaven. A heavy account indeed,' added the priest, shaking his head, 'for

they became the unwilling accomplices of this horrible deed.'

'Do you think,' enquired the stranger, with astonishment, 'that indirect participation will be punished? Is, then, the soldier who attended the execution guilty of a crime?'

The priest hesitated.

Happy at the embarrassment in which he had plunged this puritan of royalty, by placing him between the dogma of passive obedience which, according to the partisans of monarchy, should predominate in the army, and the equally important dogma which consecrates the respect due to the person of a King, the stranger hastened to construe this hesitation of the priest into a favourable answer to the doubts which engrossed him. He then said, not wishing to give further time for reflection to the venerable Jansenist:

'I cannot offer an ordinary fee for the funeral service you have just celebrated for the repose of the soul of the King and for the quietude of my conscience. An invaluable boon can only be returned by an equally invaluable offering. Deign to accept, therefore, this gift of a holy relic. A day shall come when you will understand its value.'

The stranger, suiting the action to the word, offered the priest a very light and small box. The priest took it, impulsively as it were; for the gravity of the man's words, and the respect with which he held the box, surprised him very much.

They then returned to the room where the two nuns

were waiting for them. 'You live in a house,' said the stranger, 'of which the owner, Mucius Cœvola, the plasterer who lives on the first floor, is famous, in his section, for his patriotism; but he is secretly attached to the Bourbons. Formerly he was one of Prince de Conti's grooms, and what he possesses he got from his master. If you remain indoors, you are safer here than anywhere else in France. Do not move. Pious people will see to your wants, and you can wait for more prosperous days without danger. A year hence, on January 21' (in pronouncing these last words he could not restrain a shudder), 'if you select this melancholy shelter for your abode, I shall return and celebrate with you the expiatory mass.'

He bowed to the speechless inmates of the garret, cast a final look on the symptoms of their poverty, and went away.

For the two innocent nuns, such an adventure had the interest of a romance. As soon as they were apprised of the mysterious present made by the unknown visitor to the venerable abbé, the box was placed on the table, and the three faces, feebly lighted by the candle, evinced uncontrollable curiosity. Mademoiselle de Charost opened the box, and found therein a rather large pocket-handkerchief of very fine cambric. It was soiled by a few drops of perspiration. After looking at it with scrupulous attention, they found a number of small dark spots, as if the cambric had received splashes.

'It is blood!' said the priest, in a deep voice.

The two sisters recoiled with horror from the relic.

For these simple creatures the mystery which surrounded the stranger became unexplainable. As for the priest, he did not even attempt to clear it. The three prisoners soon perceived that, even in the darkest days of the Reign of Terror, a powerful hand was extended over them. At first they received wood and provisions; then the two nuns guessed that a woman was acting in unison with their protector, when they received linen and garments which enabled them to walk out without attracting attention by the quaintness of the old-fashioned dresses they had hitherto been compelled to wear. At length Mucius Cœvola gave them two cards of civism.[1] They frequently received communications concerning the safety of the priest, and they found this advice so opportune and well-timed that they inferred that their correspondent must be familiar with the secrets of the State. In spite of the famine which prevailed in Paris, they found at their door rations of white bread, which were regularly brought by invisible hands. In these circumstances the noble inmates of the garret could not but believe their protector to be the person who had caused the expiatory mass to be celebrated in the night of January 21, 1793. He therefore became the object of peculiar respect to these three poor creatures, who had no hope, save in him, and who lived solely through his agency. Morning and evening the pious souls made wishes for his prosperity and salvation.

[1] The *carte de civisme* was a kind of passport with which it was impossible to dispense during the Reign of Terror.—N. ED.

Their gratitude, being, as it were, rekindled every day, was naturally attended with a feeling of curiosity which became more and more intense. The circumstances that had accompanied the appearance of the stranger formed the usual subject of their conversations. They made a thousand conjectures, and the occupation thereby furnished to them was an additional boon. They were resolved not to allow him to shirk their friendship when he returned according to his promise, to celebrate the melancholy anniversary of the death of Louis XVI. The long-expected evening came at last.

At midnight the heavy step was heard again on the old wooden staircase. The room had been prepared for his reception. The altar was in its place. This time the sisters hurried to the door before the stranger had time to reach the top landing, and lighted his way. Mdlle. de Charost even descended a few steps, thus sooner to catch sight of her benefactor.

'Come,' said she, in a moved and affectionate voice. 'Come; you are expected.'

The man raised his head, threw a dark look at the nun, and did not answer. She felt as if a dress of ice enveloped her, and was silent. The stranger entered, and at his sight gratitude and curiosity expired in every heart. He was perhaps less cold, taciturn, and gloomy than he had at first appeared to these beings, whose exalted sentiments yearned to launch into friendship. The three poor prisoners understood that this man wished to remain a stranger to them, and they submitted. The priest thought he detected a faint smile

on the stranger's face when he saw the preparations that had been made for his reception. He heard mass, prayed, and disappeared, after answering by a few words of negative politeness to Mdlle. de Charost's invitation to share a small repast she had prepared.

The expiatory mass was mysteriously celebrated in the garret until public worship was re-established by the First Consul. When the nuns and the abbé could reappear in the world without fear, they saw the unknown no more.

The 'Unknown' was, as I said before, Charles Henri Sanson, my grandfather, who sought, by a pious ceremony, to pacify his troubled conscience. Our family watched over these poor proscripts until the end of the Reign of Terror, and the abbé and sisters never knew the name of their protector; for the sequel of the story related by Balzac (which I have omitted) is not true, and was only written for the wants of fiction.

The relic offered to the old priest by Charles Sanson was the handkerchief the King held on reaching the scaffold. He had used it more than once, on the way from prison, to wipe the perspiration from his forehead, and a few drops of blood had stained it after the head had fallen. The different garments worn by the unfortunate monarch at the time of his death were carefully preserved by my grandfather. He was, however, unable to withhold some articles from his assistants, who, as I was told, sold them for large sums.

My father asked for and obtained the shoes and the

collar buckle; and he was only induced to part with them by an event which is worth relating. A few days after the King's death a horseman, followed by a servant, rang at our door, and asked for the master of the house. My grandfather was out; so my father received the visitor. The latter was a man of fine appearance, in the flower of age; he was dressed in black, and the Bourbonian cast of his features strongly reminded my father of Louis XVI.

'Sir!' said the new comer, who appeared much moved, 'I am told that you possess different objects which once belonged to the late King. As I suppose you wish to sell them, I came to make you an offer.'

'Sir,' answered my father, somewhat nettled, 'we have, as you say, kept a few articles of apparel belonging to the late King, but we owe no explanations to anyone concerning the use we intend to make of them; and I may as well tell you at once that we do not propose to part with them, at any price.

The visitor looked surprised.

'What! if I offered you a princely ransom for your prize——'

'We would not accept it.'

While he was speaking, my father looked attentively at the stranger, and the similarity of his features and of those of Louis XVI. struck him again. His features were finer than the unfortunate prince's, but it was the same aquiline nose, high forehead, and thick lips which formed the typical signs of the race of the Bourbons. The visitor glanced around the room, and, seeing on the wall

a very fine engraving of one of the last portraits of Louis XV., an expression of surprise and emotion appeared on his countenance. This engraving, dated 1733, was due to Daulle, one of the celebrated engravers of the time.

'If you knew,' said he, 'on what grounds I ask for these melancholy souvenirs, perhaps you would not refuse to let me have them. Let me inform you that I belong, by secret relationship, to the family of the royal victim. I am the son of the King whose portrait I have before me; I am usually styled the Abbé de Bourbon.'

My father looked at the engraving, and saw that his visitor bore a wonderful likeness to Louis XV. The Abbé de Bourbon, as he was called, was one of the illegitimate sons of this voluptuous monarch, who were indeed far too numerous to be legally recognised. Secretly protected by Louis XVI., the young abbé had been enabled to lead a semi-princely life. This patronage had inspired deep gratitude in the Abbé de Bourbon; and his desire to possess some remembrance of his beloved protector was but natural. My father could not resist his entreaties, and he gave him the shoes which the King had used last, and his collar buckle. He declined to accept any remuneration, and considered himself amply repaid by the abbé's profuse thanks.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE LA ROUERIE CONSPIRACY.

THE tribunal instituted on August 10, shortly after the King's death, was replaced by the 'Revolutionary Tribunal,' and the guillotine, which for some days had remained bloodless, was again in daily demand. The executions which took place then are not of sufficient importance to be recorded in these memoirs; and no name worth mentioning occurs in my notes up to the famous conspiracy of La Rouerie, which aimed at nothing less than the overthrow of the Republic.

The larger portion of the nobility had emigrated; but a goodly number of seigneurs still remained in France. These noblemen lived far from each other in their castles and country-seats, and watched with fear the progress of the Revolution. They abhorred the new state of things, and longed to take their revenge; but fear kept them apart, and their separation prevented them from conspiring against the Revolutionists.

Curiously enough, it was an obscure individual who undertook to bring together all these elements which were hostile to the new régime, and therewith to form in the west of France a league sufficiently powerful to

destroy the young Republic. This man's name was Tuffin de la Rouerie.

He was one of those bold and active individuals who love adventure. The beginning of his career was very romantic. He entered the army, and, after distinguishing himself as an officer, he became a Trappist. But such a man could not be content with wearing the cassock; he left La Trappe, and took part in the American War of Independence.

On his return to France, he showed some favour for the new ideas that were then spreading like wildfire; the danger of the King, however, excited his imagination, and rekindled his lukewarm loyalty. He went to Coblentz, and proposed to the princes to go and foment an insurrection in Brittany.

La Rouerie returned with a moderate sum of money; and, with no help beyond his own indomitable will, he undertook to realise the plan he had devised.

The record of his life would fill a volume, during the year he employed in organising the conspiracy which extended over the whole of Brittany, and which but for the death of its originator would have become one of the most gigantic ever recorded by history. He was everywhere and nowhere; he was seen in Jersey, in London, in Coblentz, and a few days after his steps were traced in the wilds of Brittany.

The plot was his own work. He confided his secret to no intermediary; he himself visited the most humble partisans of royalty, raised their courage, and stimulated their zeal. He showed them the King's palace invaded,

the royal family outraged, the King's head covered with the red nightcap. He proved to them the necessity of defending royalty by arms. If age, infirmities, or sex prevented them from joining the civil war, he very cleverly obtained a year of their income for the benefit of the enterprise.

In the month of August 1792 the nets of the conspiracy extended to all towns, villages, and hamlets in Brittany, and La Rouerie was the only man who held the strings of the plot. His excessive prudence prevented the plot from succeeding, and saved France from great danger. The revolution of August 10 appalled La Rouerie. Until then he had waited for a favourable opportunity. The King was now a prisoner, the Prussians were in full retreat, and he began to fear that the time was past and that it was too late.

Sorrow, excitement, and, above all, the extraordinary fatigues he had endured, had ruined his health; his frame gave way, and he sought shelter at Lamballe; but suspicious faces having been observed around the house where he was concealed, he sought another refuge, after burying in the garden all the papers he possessed; and, under the name of Gosselin, he claimed the hospitality of a Breton gentleman of the neighbourhood, M. Delamotte de Laguyomerais. La Rouerie now felt that he was dying. He revealed his real name to his host, and did not conceal the danger to which his generous hospitality exposed him. Although the local authorities had no knowledge of the extent of the conspiracy, its existence was no secret to them. Two

of La Rouerie's agents, Latouche and Lalligaud-Morillon, had sold to Danton the secrets which had been entrusted to them. A reward had been offered for La Rouerie's apprehension. The dying man stoically indicated to his host the precautions he was to take in order to conceal his body and prevent it from being identified; and shortly afterwards he expired.

M. de Laguyomerais applied to a surgeon of St. Servan, named Lemasson, with whom he was acquainted. The latter disfigured La Rouerie's corpse by numerous incisions, and in the following night the conspirator was deposited in a neighbouring wood, in a hole full of quicklime.

Unfortunately for M. de Laguyomerais, there was a traitor among his servants; a certain Chefty denounced him, and the remains of the proscript were discovered. It was ascertained that he had spent several days at Lamballe, at Mdme. de la Fauchais's house; and a search in this lady's garden led to the discovery of the papers which La Rouerie had consigned to the earth. La Rouerie had, however, destroyed the list of his accomplices. But M. de Laguyomerais, his family and his servants, the surgeon of St. Servan, and a few Breton gentlemen were arrested, sent to Paris, and arraigned before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

The trial began on August 8, and lasted ten days. The two sons of M. de Laguyomerais were discharged; M. de Laguyomerais himself, and his wife, Marie-Jeanne Micault; his brother-in-law, Mathurin Micault de Minville; Mdme. de la Fauchais; the Abbé Thébaut

de Lachavenais, tutor of Laguyomerais' sons; Anne de Pontavis, late officer in the Armagnac regiment; Picot de Moelan; Locquer de Granville; and Gurge de Fontévieux, were sentenced to death; and on August 18 they suffered their fate with the greatest courage.

Shortly before the above affair, another remarkable trial occurred. The Convention had sent to the department of Jura two of its members, Léonard Bourdon and Prost, with the mission of watching the operation of recruiting. The two delegates had stopped at Orleans, where an attempt was made to murder Bourdon. The Convention, indignant at the treatment offered to one of its members, called the municipality of Orleans before it. Orleans was noted for its lukewarm republicanism, and the Government deemed it necessary to make an example; the municipality was suspended, and a number of national guards who had attacked Bourdon were arrested and brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. Four were acquitted, and nine were sentenced to death.

My grandfather received Fouquier-Tinville's injunction to be ready; but public opinion was so strongly bent on clemency that Charles Henri Sanson himself, who was rather sceptical in such matters, did not think the execution would take place. Petitions were presented to the Convention in favour of the culprits, but no notice of them was taken, and the nine Orleanese were led to the scaffold. They were no exception to the rule, and died with great firmness.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

ON July 13, at the very moment when the corpses of the nine Orleanese were being taken to the cemetery of La Madeleine, another representative of the people was murdered. This was Marat, and the hand that dealt the death blow was a woman's.

There lived at Caen a girl named Marie-Anne Charlotte de Corday d'Armont. Her family belonged to the aristocracy, and one of her ancestors was one of the greatest national glories of France. Jacques François de Corday d'Armont, her father, was the descendant of Marie Corneille, sister of the author of 'Le Cid.' M. de Corday was poor; his daughter Charlotte was a child when her mother died, and these circumstances influenced her oversensitive and enthusiastic nature. She strongly sympathised with the Revolution, and it was in a fit of revolutionary fanaticism that she determined to go to Paris and kill Marat, whom she regarded as the worst enemy of the new régime.

She confided her intention to no one, and secretly left Caen for Paris on July 9, and arrived on the 11th.

On the following day, she went to see Duperret, a member of the Convention, for whom she had a letter. He promised to take her on the following day to the Home Office, where she wished to solicit on behalf of one of her friends, Mdlle. de Forbin. On the Saturday before calling on Duperret at the appointed hour, she wrote a note to Marat, asking for an interview. Charlotte Corday then called on the minister, in her protector's company; but Duperret was not in favour, and he could not obtain an audience. He accompanied Charlotte as far as the Palais-Royal and left her. When she was alone she entered a cutler's shop, and bought a knife with an ebony handle, and then returned to her hotel, expecting to find there Marat's answer.

Marat was ill; for some time he had not attended the sittings of the Convention. It seems to have been Charlotte Corday's original idea to strike him in the very assembly of which he was a member; but his indisposition necessitated a change in her plans. She called at Marat's house on the 13th, but was not admitted. She returned in the evening, and on her assurance that her business was of a pressing nature, she was at length ushered into Marat's presence.

The 'father of the people,' as he was styled, was in his bath. A cloth had been thrown over the bath, and Marat was writing on a board, which he used as a desk. He put a few questions to Charlotte, who suddenly approached the bath; leaning over Marat she struck him with her knife. The blow was dealt with such force that the weapon entered Marat's bosom up to the

handle. Marat uttered a cry and expired almost instantly.

His shriek for help brought in a commissionnaire named Laurent Basse, and two female attendants. Charlotte Corday was standing near the window, and did not try to escape. The commissionnaire struck her down with a chair; she rose, but Basse knocked her down a second time, and held her to the ground, while the two attendants and a surgeon were carrying Marat to his bed. A number of national guards came up, and Charlotte Corday was arrested.

The news was soon known at large, and an immense crowd assembled around Marat's dwelling, clamouring for the assassin's head. It was not deemed prudent to take Charlotte to prison until popular effervescence had subsided; she was therefore incarcerated in Marat's apartment, where Guellard du Mesnil, a commissary of police, questioned her. She answered all questions with a calmness and dignity which never forsook her until her death. A few hours after, she was taken to the Prison de l'Abbaye, where the members of the Committee of Public Safety interrogated her several times.

Charlotte appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal on July 17. She showed great firmness during the trial, the result of which, of course, was a foregone conclusion. After the jury had given in a verdict of death, she asked the gendarmes to take her to her counsel, M. Chauveau de la Garde, whom she heartily thanked for his services. Charlotte Corday was then transferred to her cell, whence she was soon to be led to the

Place de la Révolution. A priest came forward, but she firmly although courteously declined his services.

She had hardly been ten minutes in her cell when a painter, who had commenced a sketch of her in the course of the trial, entered and asked her permission to finish it. Charlotte readily acquiesced. During the sitting, which lasted an hour and a half, the unfortunate creature conversed freely with the artist, and she evinced neither surprise nor fear when the door was again thrown open, to admit the clerks of the court and the executioner. My grandfather had brought the red shirt reserved for parricides, which Charlotte Corday was to wear on her way to the guillotine.

In a preceding chapter I stated that Charles Henri Sanson had, during a period of the revolutionary crisis, kept a diary, not only of executions but also of his personal impressions. This record only became regular towards the end of Brumaire 1793; but my grandfather wrote a circumstantial account of Charlotte Corday's execution. I give it here in full:

'On this day, Wednesday, July 17, first year of the one and indivisible Republic, I executed Charlotte Corday, of Caen, who murdered the patriot Marat, member of the Convention.

'On Wednesday, 17th, as above, at ten o'clock in the morning, I went to take the orders of Citizen Fouquier-Tinville. Citizen Fouquier was busy; he sent word for me to wait. Meanwhile I went out, and had some breakfast. At one o'clock in the afternoon a citizen who had just left the Tribunal told me that the girl was

convicted. I made haste back, and met Citizen Fouquier in the witnesses' room. He was quarrelling with Citizen Montané, whom he charged with being too favourable to the accused. They entered a private room, and remained there an hour and a half. On reappearing, Citizen Fouquier saw me and said angrily, "What are you dallying here for?" I answered that he had given me no orders. Citizen Fabricius handed me a copy of the judgment, and we went to the Conciergerie together. I spoke to Richard, the gaoler, and observed that his wife was pale and frightened. I enquired whether she was unwell. She said, "Wait a moment, and perhaps your heart will fail you too." Richard conducted us to the cell occupied by the culprit. Citizens Tirrasse and Monet, the clerks of the Tribunal, entered first. I remained on the threshold. In the cell were two persons, a gendarme, and a citizen who was finishing Charlotte Corday's portrait. She was writing something on the back of a book. She looked in my direction, and asked me to wait. When she had finished, Citizens Tirrasse and Monet read out the judgment, and meanwhile Charlotte Corday folded the paper on which she had written and gave it to Citizen Monet, requesting him to hand it to Pontécoulant, the deputy. She then removed her chair to the middle of the room, took off her cap, sat down, and told me to cut her hair. Since M. de la Barre I had not seen courage equal to hers. We were, in all, six or seven men, whose profession was anything but softening; and yet she was less moved than we were. When her hair was cropped, she gave a part of it to the artist who had taken her portrait,

and handed the remainder to Richard, the gaoler, requesting him to give it to his wife. I gave her the red shirt, which she arranged herself. As I was preparing to pinion her, she asked me whether she could keep her gloves, because those who had tied her when she was arrested had tightened the cords so much that her skin was broken. I answered that she could do as she liked, but that I could pinion her without hurting her. She smiled and said, "To be sure you ought to know how to do it!" and held out her naked hands. We entered the cart, which contained two chairs, one of which I presented to her. She declined, and I told her that she was right, as the jolting of the cart was less trying in an erect position. She smiled, but was silent. There was thunder and rain when we reached the quays, but the crowd was as thick as ever. There had been a good many cries on our leaving the Conciergerie; but these cries became less and less numerous as we advanced. Insults came only from those who marched around the cart. At a window in the Rue St. Honoré, I recognised Citizens Robespierre, Camille, Desmoulins, and Danton, members of the Convention. Citizen Robespierre appeared very excited, and spoke a great deal to his companions; but the latter, and particularly Citizen Danton, did not seem to hear him, so attentively did they look at the culprit. I myself often turned round to look at her. And the more I saw of her the more I wished to see. It was not on account of her personal beauty, great as that was; but I thought it was impossible that she could remain so calm and courageous as I saw her; yet what I hitherto considered as beyond

the strength of human nerve happened. During the two hours I spent in her company I could detect no sign of anger or indignation on her face. She did not speak; she looked, not at those who insulted her, but at the citizens who were at the windows. The crowd was so dense that our cart advanced very slowly. As she was sighing, I said to her: "You find the way very long, I fear?" "No matter," she replied; "we are sure to reach the scaffold sooner or later." I rose as we reached the Place de la Révolution, and stood before her, in order to conceal the sight of the scaffold from her; but she insisted on looking at the machine, saying, "I have a right to be curious; this is the first time I see it!" In stepping out of the cart, I perceived that unknown individuals had mingled with my assistants. While I was requesting the gendarmes to clear the place, Charlotte Corday nimbly ascended the steps of the guillotine. On reaching the platform, Fermin, one of my men, suddenly snatched away her neckerchief, and she stretched out on the weigh-plank of her own accord. Although I was not ready, I thought it would be barbarous to prolong the poor girl's sufferings, even for a second, and I made a sign to Fermin, who pulled the rope. I was still at the foot of the scaffold when one of those who had tried to meddle with a business which was not theirs, a carpenter named Legros, picked up Charlotte Corday's head and showed it to the people. Although I was used to this kind of thing, I could not help turning away. It was by the murmurs of the crowd that I became aware that the rascal had struck

the head; and I was afterwards told that the face turned red, as if resenting the insult. When I went home, the prediction of Richard's wife was realised. As I was sitting down, my wife said to me, "What is the matter with you—why are you so pale?"'

My grandfather wrote to the papers, contradicting the statement that the perpetrator of the outrage he has just related was one of his assistants. The Revolutionary Tribunal ordered Legros to be arrested, and publicly reprimanded him.

CHAPTER XXX.

CUSTINE.

AFTER the painful execution of the preceding chapter. we again relapse into unimportant executions, but the quantity makes up for the quality.

On July 18 Joseph Mazellier, late officer in the cavalry regiment of Royal-Piémont, convicted of emigration and condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal, was executed.

On the 19th a working man, Jean Pierre Pelletier, was sent to the scaffold for endeavouring to pass a forged assignat, which he knew to be spurious.

On the 20th, 24th, and 25th three emigrants suffered; these were Louis Charles de Malherbe, late infantry officer; Joseph François Coquard, and François Charles Coquereau, also officers. Malherbe was barely twenty years of age.

On the 27th Riche Thomas St. Martin perished for the crime of forgery.

At this time the Tribunal was modified in a manner which promised a still more plentiful harvest of heads. The Committee of Public Safety divided it into two sections, and raised to thirty the number of the judges.

Montané, the president of the Tribunal, had himself been arraigned before the second section for favouring Charlotte Corday. He was, however, acquitted.

From the 1st to the 17th of August the two sections sent to the guillotine Pierre Maurice Collinet de la Salle-Souville, late lieutenant-general, for corresponding with his nephews, who had emigrated; Charles Joseph Lescuyer, late general of the Belgian cavalry, convicted of complicity with Dumouriez; Jean-Baptiste Tourtier, a *ci-devant*; André Jonas, a gendarme of the twenty-ninth division, for saying in a café that when he heard of the King's death he wanted to leave his regiment, in order not to serve the Republic; and an emigrant priest, Jean-Joseph Saunier.

On the 15th General Custine appeared before the Tribunal.

Republican enthusiasm would not admit that the soldiers of liberty could be conquered otherwise than by treason. This profound and sincere faith in the paramount power of right was the element of the triumphs of the Republic, and the principle of its future grandeur. Unfortunately the generals of the French army were far from sharing the sublime confidence. They were for the most part old officers, who believed in nothing beyond discipline, tactics, and regular battles, and who smiled when they read the messages in which the Convention decreed victory. The result was that the movement of retreat was followed by an outburst of popular indignation, and the unlucky general was usually charged with wilful neglect of duty.

Dumouriez's treason unfortunately justified this national mistrust. As to Custine, who commanded the army of the North, he had not deemed it prudent to relieve besieged Valenciennes until his troops were reorganised. He was charged with treason, and arraigned before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

Popular irritation was very great against him. There can be no doubt that Custine was not faultless, but his last campaign had not been without glory. While manœuvring on the flanks of the Prussian army which Dumouriez was opposing, he had captured Worms, Frankental, Regensburg, Frankfort, &c.; but he was with reason charged with not having turned these advantages to profit, and thereby transformed the retreat of the Prussians into a rout. He had allowed the enemy to recapture Frankfort; he had insufficiently victualled Regensburg, in which Kleber was bravely holding out. Such mistakes were murderous to Kleber's military repute, but they did not deserve death. The Tribunal remained undecided for some time, for the trial lasted not less than fourteen days. But Custine was not liked, and the then powerful Hébert was his mortal foe. Custine nevertheless retained his presence of mind; he explained his military operations, and his counsel, Trenson Ducoudray, spoke eloquently in his favour.

The Tribunal retired after these two speeches, and on returning gave a verdict of guilty on all counts. Custine could not withhold an expression of despair when sentence of death was passed. He recovered his self-possession, however, and wrote a touching letter to

his son, then a prisoner at La Force. The execution was appointed to take place on the following day, August 28, at twelve. At nine o'clock Charles Henri Sanson entered Custine's prison. He found him on his knees, praying with the Abbé Lothringer, metropolitan vicar, whose assistance he had asked for. The priest requested my father to wait outside for a few minutes. Shortly after, Custine himself came to fetch him. Custine's countenance was firm; but it was easy to perceive that he was labouring under nervous prostration. His hair was cut; after which he assumed his uniform, saying that it was thus a French general should die. He asked that his hands should only be tied at the foot of the scaffold, and his petition was granted.

He walked to the cart so rapidly that the Abbé Lothringer and the executioners had some trouble in keeping up with him. When the gloomy procession appeared in the street, there was as usual a loud clamour. General Custine turned very pale, and said several times: 'These are the very people who used to applaud my victories!' As the cries became more vociferous, he added: 'This is the reward of my services!' and the name of Dumouriez came to his lips. The Abbé Lothringer besought him to be resigned. Custine's eyes filled with tears, and he began to read in the prayer-book offered to him by the priest.

The stoicism displayed by Charlotte Corday had spoilt the mob. Her gentle and contemptuous attitude was well remembered, and the people doubtless expected that the general of their army would exhibit a disdain

for death still more superb. The sight of a pale old man plunged in prayer, instead of what was expected, excited popular fury, and cries and curses became universal.

When the cart halted before the scaffold, Custine turned round, not to see the instrument of death. His features were so discomposed that my grandfather thought he was going to faint; the priest was under the same impression, for he bent towards the general's ear, and said to him in German: 'General, 'tis only death, which you defied a hundred times on the battle-field; and yet you were not then, as you are now, ready to appear before your God.' The general shook his head, and then taking his confessor's hand: 'You are right,' said he, 'and yet I am sorry a Prussian cannon ball did not do the work.' He then looked at the knife, which glittered under the mid-day sun. While his hands were being tied, he asked that he should be allowed to hold the prayer-book to the last. He then ascended with a firm step the steps of the scaffold, and his head fell under the knife, into the basket, a few seconds after.

It may be justifiable to doubt Custine's genius as a general; but it is impossible to deny him the first of military virtues, courage; his was proverbial in the French army. And yet he did not encounter death with the calm bravery which we found among ordinary citizens, whose profession and habits were quite peaceful, and even among women. This phenomenon shows the difference that exists between nervous excitement, which can make a hero of a man, and the manly forti-

tude which remains unshaken, even by the most hideous of deaths. It shows the superiority of civil over military courage.

The importance of Custine's trial had retarded the progress of another case, that of twenty-one inhabitants of Rouen, accused of having incited their countrymen to civil war, of having harboured the white cockade, and sawed the tree of liberty. This interesting case was resumed on the morrow of the general's death. Ten, among whom were two women, were sentenced to death and guillotined.[1]

The 16th of Vendémiaire following was a noteworthy day in the history I am now writing. Until then the Republic had only struck its enemies; on the 16th of Vendémiaire she began her self-destruction by slaying one of those who had powerfully contributed to her establishment. Gorsas, deputy and journalist, whose lawsuit with my grandfather the reader may remember, was the first member of the Convention who ascended the scaffold, where the most illustrious among his colleagues were soon to follow him. Gorsas had evaded the arrest decreed on June 2 against him and his friends of the Gironde. Pethion, Barbaroux, Louvet, and several others had gone into the provinces to raise an insurrection against the autocracy of the capital; Gorsas had refused to join them. He was an ardent writer, a tribune of the press, and he understood that his

[1] Here the translator has omitted a long list of executions which, beyond testifying to the completeness of the present Memoirs, offer no particular interest.

strength was in Paris. The decree of July 28, describing as a crime the contempt showed by the Girondins for the so-called national authority, had declared them outlaws. Peril could not induce Gorsas to leave Paris; for three months he lived in hiding, but he was at length arrested. He was taken before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and from thence to the scaffold.

Gorsas was brave to the last. When my grandfather saw his former enemy, he tried to avoid being seen by him; but Gorsas espied him at the foot of the scaffold, and cried to him in a loud voice:

'Why do you stand aside, Citizen Sanson? Come and enjoy your triumph. We thought we were overthrowing the Monarchy: we have only founded your reign.'

My grandfather made no reply and looked down. Indeed he was beginning to have enough of his royalty.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE QUEEN.

HOWEVER enthusiastic a great many people may be respecting the general results of the Revolution, it seems to me impossible to think without some emotion of a Queen who in less than a year was deprived of her throne and liberty—of a woman widowed by the executioner's axe, separated from her children, and treated with revolting indignity. When, in my young days, I used to accompany my father to the Conciergerie prison, I never passed before the unfortunate Queen's cell without feeling deeply moved. When I looked at the black and rusty door behind which Marie Antoinette had been imprisoned for two months, I hastily walked away, seeing in my mind's eye the awful tragedy which had been partly enacted in the gloomy prison.

After the death of Louis XVI. the royal captives of the Temple had not been forgotten. The hatred of the Parisians against the King was wholly political; it was aimed at the King, not at the man. Against Marie Antoinette popular hatred was both political and personal. The Queen had found implacable enemies, not

only among the Revolutionists who wished to overthrow the Monarchy, but among her own courtiers, and even in the ranks of her own family. None could forgive her independent mind, her elegant tastes, her liking for amusements forbidden by etiquette. By traducing her sentiments, by incriminating her acts, her enemies had rendered her odious to all other women. The Revolutionists knew the Queen to be far more energetic than Louis XVI.; they understood that if some resistance was to be offered to their designs, such resistance must come from Marie Antoinette, and they gave her out as the bitterest enemy of liberty. They styled her the ghoul of France, and the accomplice of the foreigner. Unanimity in hostile feelings was the cause of unanimity in the calumnies wherewith the Queen was assailed. On several occasions the name of the captive Queen was pronounced in the Convention, and then the violent party of which Hébert was leader asked for the arraignment of the widow of Capet.

Public opinion was getting too strong for the Convention. On August 4 a decree sent her before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and on the 14th of the same month she was sentenced to death, after a trial which is too well known for me to recall the circumstances which attended the melancholy affair. I have occasionally related at length the events of a criminal's career which led to the executioner's intervention, but only when I might reasonably think that the reader was not previously acquainted with them. In Marie Antoinette's case, my relation can only dwell upon the time that

elapsed between her condemnation and execution. Charles Henri Sanson did not leave us a complete account of the Queen's death; and the omission, which I cannot explain, is very much to be regretted. The following relation, however, I had from my father, who had then reached manhood, and who usually assisted my grandfather in the discharge of his functions.

Charles Henri Sanson was present at the Queen's trial. No sooner was the verdict given than he tapped at the door of Fouquier-Tinville's closet. Fouquier told him to come in, and he found himself in the presence of Herman, the president of the court, Renaudin, a judge, Nicolas, also a judge, and Fabricius Paris, the clerk of the court. Fouquier immediately enquired whether preparations for the *fête* (that was the word he used) were complete. Charles Henri Sanson having responded that his duty was to await the decisions of Justice, and not anticipate them, Fouquier upbraided him with his usual violence. Fabricius, the clerk, mingled his merry jokes with the public prosecutor's invectives. The conversation was assuming a disagreeable turn. To put an end to it, my grandfather asked for an order to procure a closed carriage similar to that in which the King had been taken to the guillotine. This request thoroughly exasperated Fouquier-Tinville; he answered that Charles Henri himself deserved to perish on the scaffold for daring to make such a suggestion, and that a cart was quite good enough for the Austrian. But Renaudin observed that before taking any decision it was desirable to consult the Committee of Public Safety, or some of its

members; and after some discussion Fouquier acquiesced. Nourry, *alias* Grammont, formerly an actor of the Montansier Theatre, had just entered. He undertook the errand, and on returning said that he had consulted Robespierre and Collot, but that neither would give an opinion on the matter, on the plea that Fouquier had power to act as he thought fit. It was finally decided that the Queen should be taken to the scaffold in a cart.

It was five o'clock in the morning when my grandfather left the Tribunal. All were asleep when he entered his house. He made only a short appearance in his bedroom, and was walking out on tiptoe, for fear of waking his wife, when the latter, who slept lightly, called him to her bedside, and, on looking in his face, she at once guessed the issue of the Queen's trial. She was so deeply affected that Charles Henri had to call his son to his assistance. He dared not let any one else see her. Her tears were a crime in the eyes of the man in power, and most of his assistants tried to obliterate the dishonour of their profession by the fervency of their democratic opinions.

This occurrence so unmanned Charles Henri Sanson, that his son prepared to accompany him. So they went together to the Place de la Révolution, to see that the scaffold was in good order; and from thence they repaired to the Conciergerie, where they arrived at ten o'clock. The prison was already surrounded by armed men. My father and grandfather were joined by citizen Eustache Nappier, one of the ushers of the Revolu-

tionary Tribunal, who was to be present throughout the proceedings.

They entered the prison, and were taken to the Queen's presence. Marie Antoinette was in the 'Hall of the Dead,' reclining on a seat, her head against the wall; the two gendarmes who watched her were standing within a few steps, with Bault, the turnkey, whose daughter was standing before Marie Antoinette, weeping bitterly.

When the messengers of death entered, the Queen rose and made a step to meet them, but she was stopped by Bault's daughter, whom she embraced with much tenderness. She wore a white dress; a white handkerchief covered her shoulders; and her hair was surmounted by a cap tied with a black ribbon. She was pale, but not out of apprehension, for her lips were red and her eyes brilliant.

My grandfather and father took their hats off; many others bowed; Nappier the usher, and a few gendarmes, were the only persons who abstained from giving so slight a token of deference. Before any one had time to speak, the Queen advanced, and in a dry voice she said:

'Gentlemen, I am ready. We can set out.'

Charles Henri Sanson observed that a few formalities had yet to be fulfilled. Marie Antoinette showed the back of her neck, where the hair had been cut.

'That will do, I think?' said she to him.

At the same time she held out her hands for him to bind them. While my father was so occupied, the Abbé

Lothringer entered the room and asked her leave to accompany her. The abbé, who had taken the oath of fidelity to the Republic, had already proffered his services, but they had been declined. His repeated request visibly displeased the Queen, who however answered:

'You can come with me if you like.'

The *cortége* immediately moved forward. The gendarmes preceded the queen, by whose side was the abbé; behind came the clerk, the executioners, and more gendarmes.

On reaching the court, Marie Antoinette saw the cart; she came to a sudden halt, and a strong feeling of horror appeared on her features. She, however, mastered her emotion, and was helped up by my grandfather and his son. The gates were slowly opened, and the Queen of France appeared before the people. There was an immense clamour of maledictions, a torrent of curses, and cries of 'Death!' The crowd was so compact that the cart could hardly move, and the horse reared and backed. There was so terrible a moment of confusion that both my grandfather and father rose and placed themselves before Marie Antoinette. At two different points men had broken through the rank of the escort, and instead of driving them back, or trying to calm popular effervescence, the gendarmes joined in their vociferations. The son of Nourry-Grammont, who, like his father, was an officer in the army, had the cowardice to threaten the Queen's face with his clenched fist. The Abbé Lothringer pushed him back, and upbraided him for his unworthy conduct.

This scene lasted two or three minutes. Never, my father often told me, did Marie Antoinette appear more dignified than she did then. Grammont, the father, went forward with a few horsemen and cleared the way. From time to time cries and curses partly subsided. A few cries of '*Death to the Austrian! Death to Madame Veto!*' rose from the crowd; but these exclamations became rarer and rarer.

Marie Antoinette stood erect in the cart; the Abbé Lothringer was speaking to her, but she did not answer, and did not even seem to hear him. When the Palais Egalité was passed, she began to manifest some uneasiness. She looked at the numbers of the houses with more than commonplace curiosity. The Queen had foreseen that no priest of her religion would be allowed to accompany her; and a proscribed ecclesiastic, with whom she had communicated, had promised to be in a house of the Rue St. Honoré on the day of the execution, and to give her from a window absolution *in extremis*. The number of the house had been designated to Marie Antoinette, and that was what she was looking for. She discovered it; and then, at a sign which she alone understood, having recognised the priest, she bent her head and prayed. After this she breathed more freely, and a smile came to her lips.

On reaching the Place de la Révolution, the cart halted precisely opposite the large walk of the Tuileries; for a few moments the Queen was plunged in painful contemplation; her colour faded away, her eyelids trembled, and she was heard to murmur:

'My daughter! my children!'

The sight of the scaffold recalled her to herself, and she prepared to descend. My grandfather and my father supported her. As she placed her foot on the ground, Charles Henri Sanson, who was bending towards her, said in her ear:

'Have courage, Madame!'

The Queen looked round, as if surprised to find pity in the heart of the man who was about to put her to death, and answered:

'Thank you, sir, thank you.'

A few yards separated the cart from the guillotine. My father offered to continue to support her, but she declined, saying:

'No; I am, thank Heaven, strong enough to walk that short distance.'

She advanced slowly, but with a firm step, and mounted the scaffold as majestically as if the steps of the guillotine had been those of the grand staircase at Versailles.

Her arrival on the platform produced some confusion. The Abbé Lothringer, who had followed her, was going on with his useless exhortations. My father thrust him aside, wishing to finish the execution without the loss of a second. The assistants took possession of Marie Antoinette. While they were tying her down to the weigh-plank, she exclaimed, in a loud voice:

'Farewell, my children; I am going to join your father.'

The plank was replaced in its original position,

and the knife came down upon the neck with a heavy thump.

Some cries of '*Vive la République!*' were heard around the scaffold, and Grammont ordered Charles Henri to show the head to the people. One of the assistants went through the horrible formality. The Queen's body was placed in a coffin of common wood and burnt in quick-lime, in the cemetery of La Madeleine. Her clothing was given to the poor.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE GIRONDINS.

AFTER the Queen's trial came that of the inhabitants of Armentières, charged with conspiracy with the enemy, with the purpose of betraying the town into their hands. Six prisoners were discharged: but Pierre François Malingié, formerly *juge-de-paix* of Armentières; Pellerin Guy Jouar, merchant; Joseph Delattre, merchant; and Paul François Clarisse, hatter, were sentenced to capital punishment, and executed on the 27th of Vendémiaire.

On the 1st of Brumaire (October 22) came the turn of Louis Armand Pernon, manager of the national pottery, charged with having corresponded with the rebels of Lyons; and on the 2nd that of Pierre Hippolyte Pastourel, a priest.

On the 5th the Tribunal sent an emigré, Jacques André François d'Ouzonville, and his wife, to the guillotine. Public attention at the time forsook the Place de la Révolution, engrossed as it was by a trial of the highest importance—that of the Girondins.

This trial was as loudly asked for by the clubs and the Commune as that of the Queen had been; but the charge

against the deputies, arrested on account of their moderate and just republicanism, was difficult to make out. Those of the Girondins who had not taken to flight had committed no reprehensible act. In this predicament it was resolved to consider their opinions as being criminal, and the accusation was drawn up. Fouquier-Tinville received it on the 12th of Brumaire, and on the 13th the prisoners were transferred from the Prison des Carmes to la Conciergerie, the last halting-place on the way to the scaffold.

The flight of Pétion, Barbaroux, Guadet, and a few others, had left a gap in the ranks of the twenty arraigned deputies; to complete the figure consecrated by the insurrection of June 2, other deputies were chosen among those who had since then been arrested, and twenty-one prisoners, who with Gorsas (who had been executed some time before) made up the requisite number, appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

These were:

Jean Pierre Brissot, aged 39, man of letters and deputy of Eure-et-Loire.

Pierre Victorin Vergniaud, aged 35, deputy of la Gironde.

Arnaud Gensonné, aged 35, deputy of la Gironde.

Claude Romain Loze Duperret, aged 46, deputy of Bouches-du-Rhône.

Jean Louis Carra, aged 50, man of letters and deputy of Saone-et-Loire.

Jean François Martin Gardien, aged 39, deputy of Indre-et-Loire.

Charles Eléonore Dufriche Valazé, aged 42, deputy of Orne.

Jean Duprat, aged 38, deputy of Bouches-du-Rhône.

Charles Alexis Bruslard (formerly Marquis de Sillery), aged 57, deputy of la Somme.

Charles Fauchet, aged 49 (formerly a bishop), deputy of Calvados.

Jean François Ducos, aged 28, man of letters, deputy of la Gironde.

Marie David Lasource, aged, 39, deputy of Tarn.

Benoît Lesterpt-Beauvais, aged 43, deputy of Haute-Vienne.

Gaspard Du Chastel, aged 27, deputy of Deux-Sèvres.

Pierre Mainvieille, aged 28, deputy of Bouches-du-Rhône.

Jacques Lacase, aged 42, deputy of la Gironde.

Pierre Lehardy, aged 35, deputy of Morbihan.

Jacques Boileau, aged 41, deputy of Yonne.

Charles Louis Antiboul, aged 40, deputy of Var.

Louis François Sébastin Vigié, aged 36, deputy of Mayenne-et-Loire.

On the 3rd of Brumaire they appeared before the Tribunal. Fabricius, the clerk of the court, read the indictment, in which it was attempted to show that the accused had conspired against the unity and indivisibility of the Republic and the safety of the nation. Most of the witnesses heard for the prosecution were those who had directed the revolutionary movement of May 31, and whose hostility to the Girondins was manifest

and well known. The trial, which lasted several days, was a kind of farce. It is not within my province to relate it, and I will therefore pass it over. When the jury had delivered a verdict of guilty against all the arraigned Girondins, the latter were brought in to receive sentence. They had shown indomitable courage during the whole trial, and few among them yielded to despair or discouragement. Boileau threw up his hat, exclaiming: 'I die innocent.' Sillery, who was lame, threw away his crutches and said: 'This day is the finest in my life.' Boyer Fonfrède embraced Ducos, his brother-in-law, saying: 'My friend, I led you to this.' Fauchet and Duprat were rather cast down; but Carra retained his self-possession; Lasource addressed a few words to the jury, that could not be heard in the tumult then prevailing; as to Vergniaud, the noblest and most eloquent of all, he lost nothing of the admirable serenity he had displayed throughout the ordeal; then all rose simultaneously, crying '*Vive la République!* we are innocent!' A cry of death, however, rose higher than this clamour; a voice said 'I am dying.' The president of the Tribunal directed the gendarmes to lead away the prisoners. One, however, did not move; it was Dufriche Valazé who had said 'I am dying,' after stabbing himself to the heart.

This painful scene had created the utmost confusion. Camille Desmoulins, who was present, ran out of the hall in an agony of grief, charging himself with the death of the Girondins. The foreman of the jury was as pale as death. Fouquier-Tinville, the public prosecutor, alone was calm.

In a cold voice he asked that Valazé's corpse should be placed in one of the executioner's carts, to be burned with the bodies of his 'accomplices' after execution.

So early as the 8th of Brumaire, that is to say four days before the actual condemnation of the Girondins, Fouquier-Tinville had directed the executioner to provide for the emergency of an extraordinary execution. My grandfather had therefore sought assistants. By a singular contrast, which shows the instinctive horror of the masses for the punishment which was then so frequently inflicted, he had the greatest difficulty in recruiting auxiliaries for the service of the scaffold. Fouquier had informed my grandfather that at least twelve assistants were necessary. Charles Henri, with the greatest trouble, found three men; and as he was going in quest of another man, a *protégé* of Hébert presented himself, and proposed to act as executioner's valet. This individual's garrulity and his grimacing and sinister countenance displeased Charles Henri Sanson, who refused to engage him. One of those who were present at the interview assured my grandfather that the man was a mountebank, who, under the name of Jacot, performed on the Boulevard du Temple, and Charles Henri was congratulating himself on having got rid of him, when Fouquier-Tinville summoned him to his presence, and, after charging him with neglect of duty, ordered him to engage Jacot.

On the following day, 10th Brumaire (October 30), my grandfather passed his auxiliaries in review. They consisted of ten assistants, properly speaking, and five

cart drivers, with their carts. Hébert's *protégé* was present. Charles Henri Sanson thought he perceived a red waistcoat under his *carmagnole*, but he paid little attention to the circumstance. At eight o'clock in the morning he set out for the Conciergerie with my father and six assistants; two more went to the Place de la Révolution, and two remained to take care of the carts; Jacot was one of the latter. A great many soldiers already surrounded the prison. Two clerks of the Tribunal, Nappier and Monet (the same who had attended Charlotte Corday to the scaffold), had already arrived, and were waiting for the executioner in the porter's lodge. They repaired together to the Palais de Justice, where they took their final orders; and then they prepared to appear before the unfortunate Girondins.

It had been decided that preparations for the execution should take place in the parlour of the prison—a lofty dark hall, which people were beginning to call the 'Hall of the Dead,' since it served as an antechamber of the scaffold. When my grandfather entered with his men and the gendarmes, the convicts were already assembled there. They formed several groups; some were pacing the hall; others formed circles; all of them spoke with much animation, like friends who were about to be separated by a long voyage. Brulard, Sillery, and Bishop Fauchet, conversed in a low voice in a dark corner; Mainvieille was writing on his knees. The corpse of Valazé had been deposited on three stools before the window.

At the sight of the sinister *cortége*, they uttered a confused exclamation, and some of them rushed into

each other's arms and embraced. Nappier, the clerk, called out the names of the convicts, and at each name one of the Girondins answered 'Present!' and several added a few words of irony.

'Present!' said Vergniaud; 'if our blood can cement liberty, we welcome you.'

'I don't like long speeches; I am no adept in the art of outraging reason and justice,' cried Ducos, sarcastically quoting Robespierre's very words. Nappier having roughly interrupted him, he added, with a burst of laughter: 'Well, present, without phrases.'

Duperret, instead of answering, impeached the town of Paris, saying that its representatives were murdering the most devoted patriots. Brissot, one of the most distinguished Girondins, was gloomy; Vergniaud spoke to him for some time with vehemence, but all that could be heard of what he said were the often repeated words of republic and liberty. When the nominal appeal was terminated, all the convicts, with equal enthusiasm, cried '*Vive la République!*'

The sight of these men, whose last cry was a glorification of the Republic in the name of which they were being sent to the guillotine, was awful and impressive. Often has my father, when he was giving me the above details, repeated that no execution ever moved him more. The toilet began; during this preliminary preparation the Girondins remained serene and self-possessed. My grandfather and my father cut their hair; the assistants bound their hands. They came forward without any affectation or bravado, and continued to converse.

As Duprat was about to sit down on the stool, Mainvieille approached, holding the letter he had been writing. He handed it to his companion, together with a pen, saying to my father:

'You will allow us to devote a few moments to our family affairs, I hope?'

Duprat then added a few words to the letter, which was addressed to a woman whom they both loved.

Ducos was the last who underwent the toilette, and it was my father who cut his hair. Fonfrède, his brother-in-law, stood behind him. During the operation a few hairs, which were caught between the scissors, were torn out. Ducos could not refrain from making a movement, and while his hands were being tied he said to my father:

'I hope the edge of your guillotine is sharper than your scissors!'

When all were ready, my grandfather gave the signal for departure. Some of the gendarmes had already descended the stairs which led to the entrance of the prison. The convicts pressed around Vergniaud, and seemed to wish to confer upon him the honour of marching first; but Vergniaud, pointing to Valazé's body, which two assistants were placing on a tressel: '*He* preceded us in death,' said he in a grave voice; 'he must show us the way.'

All then stood back at his bidding, and the corpse was borne away. The Girondins followed. Nappier, the clerk of the court, had arranged that they should be placed in the carts according to the order of their names

in the judgment; but the confusion which attended the departure prevented the execution of a measure which might have deprived some of the Girondins of the supreme consolation of confiding their last thoughts to a personal friend. They entered the carts they preferred, and found themselves thus distributed: Gensonné, Carra, Duperret, Lasource, and Duchâtel in the first cart; Brissot, Vergniaud, Ducos, Boyer-Fonfrède, and Vigié in the second; Gardien, Mainvieille, Duprat, Fauchet, Sillery, and Lasource, in the third; Antiboul, Boileau, Lehardy, and Beauvais in the fourth. My grandfather and my father were in the first two carts, and an assistant in each of the other carts; each of them held the end of the cord which communicated with the wrists of the convicts. Contrary to what has been said by some historians, there was no convict in the fifth cart, which was reserved for the body of Valazé.

The sky was dark and rainy; a foggy atmosphere covered the town; nevertheless, an immense crowd filled the streets. More curiosity than passion was displayed by the public. Few were conscious of the importance of the sacrifice which was about to be made; but few also seemed to share the violent sentiments expressed at the Club des Jacobins and in the Convention. Silence was generally preserved on the way; but, as usually occurred when illustrious victims were being led to death, a gang of men and women had mingled with the *cortége*, and gave vent to furious exclamations. Scarcely had the carts reached the Quai de la Conciergerie when my grandfather became aware that his new assistant, Jacot, had taken off his *carmag-*

nole, under which he wore a mountebank's costume; the wretch had mounted the horse of the cart entrusted to him, and was going through a series of feats of equitation, which he only interrupted to address to the crowd ironical remarks relating to the convicts. Charles Henri immediately descended, and endeavoured to drive Jacot away; but the crowd, and even the gendarmes, sided with the mountebank, and my grandfather was obliged to return to his cart amidst groans and hisses. The cries of '*Vive la République!*' were frequently uttered on the way. Mainvieille and Duprat repeated with the crowd: '*Vive la République!*' On two or three occasions only came forth the cry: 'Death to traitors!' The Girondins heard it without anger; but a stentorian voice, which came from the fourth cart, exclaimed: 'The Republic! You shall not have it!' Vergniaud, behind whom was my father, heard the exclamation, and cried: 'Do not say that; the Republic costs us dear enough for us to carry away the hope that it shall not be overthrown.'

Not one showed signs of weakness. Vergniaud was grave and collected, and endeavoured to dispel the sinister presentiments of Brissot, who seemed to think that the Republic could not survive their death. Ducos and Boyer-Fonfrède conversed in a low voice; my father saw tears on the cheeks of the latter. The convicts of the other carts were not less dignified. Twice they struck up the *Marseillaise*. Ducos, who was only twenty-seven years old, seemed to become more lively and caustic as the fatal moment was drawing near. As

the carts reached the Place de la Révolution, he said, looking at the guillotine:

'What a pity it is that the Convention did not decree the unity and indivisibility of our persons!'

After being placed in a file before the scaffold, between two rows of gendarmes, the Girondins embraced, and were heard encouraging each other to die bravely, without fear or reproach, as they had lived. Then they once more struck up the *Marseillaise*, and the sacrifice began.

Sillery was the first to appear on the platform. He walked around the scaffold, and bowed four times to the crowd. He suffered from paralysis and walked with difficulty. One of the assistants having told him to be quick, he answered:

'Can't you wait a moment? I wait also, and yet I am in a greater hurry than you are.'

As the knife came down, the chorus of the convicts became stronger. After Sillery came Fauchet; Carra, Lesterpt-Beauvais, Duperret, and Lacase followed.

Charles Henri Sanson was superintending the execution. Fermin, the head assistant, was pulling the rope. My father watched over the removal of the bodies, which were thrown, two by two, into baskets prepared behind the guillotine. But when six heads had fallen, the baskets and the weigh-planks were so saturated that the contact of the blood must have been more horrible than death itself to those who were to follow. Charles Henri Sanson ordered the two assistants to throw pails of water over the plank, and to sponge it after each execution.

The ranks of the convicts were beginning to thin.

Their chants were diminishing in intensity, but not in vigour. Boileau, Antiboul, Gardien, Lasource, Brissot, one after the other ascended the steps of the scaffold. While Lehardy was being bound to the plank, he cried three times: '*Vive la République!*' Duprat was executed after him. Before leaving his friends, Ducos embraced Fonfrède, his brother-in-law; in ascending the steps, he said to my father:

'Ah! would that your guillotine could kill me at the same time as my brother!'

He was still speaking when the knife came down upon his neck.

Only six Girondins now remained; but they went on singing. Gensonné, Mainvieille, Boyer-Fonfrède, and Duchâtel were executed. Vergniaud and Vigié were still alive. It has been asserted that Vergniaud was the last who died. This is an error. It had been hoped that some of the Girondins would show some symptom of fear, and those who had exhibited the greatest fortitude had been reserved for the last. Nappier, the clerk, was about to point to Vigié as the next victim, when he thought he detected a tremor in his voice; he immediately turned to Vergniaud and bid him to come forward. Nappier doubtless thought that Vigié, being deprived of the support of his friend, would lose courage, and that the horrible hecatomb would thus finish by an exhibition of fear. Nothing of the kind took place. When Vergniaud's corpse had joined those of his friends, Vigié came forward with the pride of a conqueror. He was still singing while they were binding him to the plank.

The execution lasted forty-three minutes; that is, a little more than two minutes for each convict.

In the evening of the same day, Charles Henri Sanson complained to Fouquier of the extraordinary conduct of Hébert's *protégé* in the hope of getting rid of the ruffian; he argued that the way to beget sympathy for the condemned was to insult prisoners, as Jacot had done. Fouquier paid no attention to my grandfather's recriminations, and asked him why he did not with his own hand pull the rope which communicated with the knife. My grandfather replied that under the former *régime* it was customary for the executioner to carry out himself sentences entailing decapitation, but that since a machine had been substituted for human strength and dexterity, the most important duty was to watch the preparations and the carrying out of an execution; that the slightest neglect could give rise to frightful accidents; and that, as he was personally responsible, it was only natural that he should see himself to the superintendence.

Fouquier-Tinville appeared satisfied with these reasons; but in sending my grandfather away, he told him that he should keep an eye upon him, and added, with a significant gesture, that if he did not discharge his duties not only as an experienced executioner, but as a patriot, he, Sanson, might very well change parts, and be executed himself.

The result of this conversation was that Jacot was maintained as my grandfather's assistant; and the man's sinister grimaces were repeated in most important executions, to the great satisfaction of the mob.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ADAM LUX.—THE DUKE OF ORLEANS.

FROM the time of the death of the Girondins, executions became more and more frequent; the real Reign of Terror began. Not a day passed without the guillotine being used, and my grandfather and my father had scarcely breathing time. Three executions took place on the 11th of Brumaire, and three more on the 12th. On the 13th the Revolutionary Tribunal sent to the scaffold Olympe de Gouges, a woman famous for her talents and courage. She had hailed the Revolution with delight; but pity soon invaded her heart, and in a fit of generous boldness she wrote to the Convention, to ask leave to defend the King. She then attacked the revolutionary party with such violence that the papers refused to accept any more of her contributions, and she was obliged to use placards as a medium of communication with the public. For this she was incarcerated for five months, tried, and executed.

On the 14th two convicts appeared on the guillotine. One was a woman called Marie Madeleine Contelet. She had been found in possession of a letter in which the Commune and the Convention were spoken of con-

temptuously. This was enough to ensure a condemnation to death. The other convict was Adam Lux, sent by the town of Mayence to solicit the annexation of his native town to France. Adam Lux was an enthusiastic dreamer, who judged men in the simplicity of his heart and with the sincerity of faith. He believed that universal regeneration would succeed to the proclamation of the principles of right and justice. Adam Lux was plunged in deep and dark despair, and was thinking of committing suicide, when he saw Charlotte Corday. He had sought in vain for liberty, but the tenderness which filled his mystic heart could not remain unquenched; he gave himself to the priestess as he had given himself to the goddess. Full of faith in this extraordinary posthumous love, he only wished to join Charlotte in death, and he lost no opportunity of impeaching and attacking the Montagne. He was soon arraigned before the Revolutionary Tribunal. Nor was he unworthy of Charlotte Corday. After the act of accusation had been read to him, he said to Fouquier-Tinville: 'I am a stranger to your laws as well as to your crimes; if I have deserved to perish, it is not among the French that I should suffer.' When sentence was passed he exclaimed: 'At last I shall be free!' He dressed himself with much care to proceed to the guillotine, as if hoping that Charlotte Corday's spirit was waiting for him over the scaffold. His female companion was executed first. Hardly was the body removed when Adam Lux appeared on the platform, and stretched himself out on the plank, exclaiming 'At last!'

On the 15th another woman, named Madeleine Kolly, was executed; on the 16th it was the turn of one of the most famous initiators of the Revolution, Louis Philippe Joseph d'Orléans. It was in vain that this prince had exchanged his title for the significant name of *Egalité*, that he had given to the Revolution a far more awful guarantee by voting the death of his king and relative; he had not succeeded in obliterating the recollection of his birth and immense fortune. Justly hated by the Royalists, he had soon embarrassed the Republicans. The Girondins would not believe that patriotism was the only reason for the democratic conversion of a prince of the blood. Ever since the first meeting of the Convention, they had never ceased to treat him as a pretender. On the other hand, the Montagne was aware that the presence of a Bourbon in its ranks would estrange from it all other revolutionary parties. It was therefore resolved that he should die. Dumouriez's treason was seized upon as the best opportunity for the execution of this design. Arrested April 7, Égalité was transferred to Marseilles on the 12th. He found there his two sons, the Dukes of Montpensier and Beaujolais, who had also been arrested. After an incarceration of six months in the Fort St. Jean, he was led back to Paris on the 2nd of Brumaire, and imprisoned in the Conciergerie.

The death of this troublesome accomplice was so evidently decided beforehand that Fouquier-Tinville did not even try to elaborate an indictment, and used that which had been drawn up against the Girondins, the relentless enemies of Égalité. When the latter heard

himself described as a *Brissotin*, when he heard the charge that he had attempted to place the Duke of York on the throne of France, he interrupted the reading, and exclaimed: 'But surely this is a joke!' When the president asked him if he had any answer to make, he said coldly 'that the charges just uttered against him conflicted with each other, and could not possibly be urged against him, since it was well known that he had constantly opposed the system and the measures of the party he was accused of having favoured.'

He was defended with much energy by Charles Voidel; but, as I said before, his death had been considered indispensable, and the Duke of Orleans's popularity was not sufficient to make the jury hesitate upon a measure which they deemed necessary. The Duke heard the sentence without displaying the slightest emotion; and turning towards Antonnelle, the foreman of the jury, who had once been one of his close friends, he said:

'Since you were determined to kill me, you should have devised more plausible pretexts than you have alleged; for you will never persuade any one that I am guilty of the crime for which you put me to death; and you less than anybody else, Antonnelle, for you know me well. Since my fate is decided, I request you not to make me wait until to-morrow, and to order my immediate execution.'

General Coustard, his aide-de-camp, also a member of the Convention, was sentenced to death with him. The Tribunal having granted the Duke's request, Charles

Henri Sanson was sent for; and to him the clerk of the Tribunal handed an order of immediate execution, which included two other prisoners condemned on the preceding day: Jacques Nicolas de Laroque, ex-sub-delegate of Mortagne, and Pierre Gondier, stockbroker.

It was half-past three o'clock when my grandfather received this order. As he was about to start with the prisoners, he was told to wait, and a fifth victim was handed over to him. This was a workman named Antoine Brousse.

The Duke of Orleans was pacing the prison parlour when the executioner appeared. He was slightly pale, but otherwise showed no emotion. My grandfather took off his hat, as he always did; but the Duke paid no attention to him. On being asked, however, whether he would allow his hair to be cut, he sat down without making any remark. At that moment the four other victims were brought in. M. de Laroque entered first; he was a fine old man, and his face was of noble cast. As one of the assistants was offering to cut his hair, he took off the wig which covered his bald head, saying: 'This renders your formality useless.' The Duke of Orleans, who until then had been sitting with his back turned, having risen, M. de Laroque recognised him, and strong indignation appeared on the old man's face as he exclaimed:

'I am no longer sorry to leave life since he who has betrayed my country meets with condign punishment; but, sir, I confess I am much humiliated at having to die on the same scaffold as you.'

The Duke did not answer, and turned away.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon when the *cortége* left the Conciergerie. The prince's *sang-froid* did not forsake him; but his courage essentially differed from that displayed by the Girondins and so many other victims; his countenance expressed indifference and disgust. The leader of the escort stopped before the Égalité palace, on the front of which were written the words 'national property.' The prince understood why the halt had been made. He looked for a moment at the abode of his ancestors, and then turned away scornfully.

M. de Laroque was the first whose head fell. He bade farewell to all his companions, except to the Duke of Orleans. Gondier came next, then Coustard, and lastly Brousse.

The prince witnessed these executions without emotion. He appeared in his turn on the platform, shrugged his shoulders, and looked with a proud and haughty air at the people who were hissing him. After taking off his coat, the assistants wished to divest him of his boots, but he resisted, and advanced towards the plank, saying: 'You are losing time; you can take them off at greater leisure when I am dead.' [1]

[1] Forty years later, Louis Philippe, son of Égali proclaimed King of the French.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MADAME ROLAND AND BAILLY.

SIX executions took place on the 17th of Brumaire—those of Rideau, mason; Jean Clain, upholsterer; Julien Cailleau, cooper; Jean Teynière, shoemaker; Florent Ollivier, labourer; and Thomas Herry, labourer—all municipal councillors of Pont-de-Cé, convicted of conspiracy with the rebels of La Vendée.

These unfortunate men were soon to be followed by another illustrious victim. Madame Roland was arrested on May 31, and she appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal on the 18th of Brumaire. Madame Roland had been the soul of the Gironde; the elevation of her intellect, the grace of her wit, the superiority of her views had given her serious influence, not only over her husband, but over the illustrious men who congregated in her drawing-room. This intervention of a woman in politics had excited much anger, both in the press and in the Convention; Madame Roland's caustic *verve*, her just contempt for ambitious mediocrities, had swelled the ranks of her enemies. It was thus that, after the death of her friends, the Girondins, she was violently assailed, and finally arrested and arraigned. The im-

peachment was mainly based on her connection with the Girondins. Madame Roland was resigned to her fate, but she could not, without indignation, listen to the insults that were cast upon the memory of her friends, and she attempted to defend them:

'In what time, and among what people do we live!' she exclaimed. 'It is not my business to speak of the men you have proscribed, but I never believed that they had evil intentions, for they gave to this country many proofs of their patriotism, integrity, and devotion. If they were mistaken, their error was virtuous; they may have been misled, but they incurred no dishonour. If it was a crime to wish for their safety, I declare in the face of the world that I am a criminal, and that I joyfully share with them the honour of being persecuted by their enemies. I have, indeed, known well the generous men who were accused of having conspired against their country; they were firm but humane Republicans; they thought that good laws only could make the Republic popular with those who had no confidence in democratic institutions.'

The president of the Tribunal interrupted her, saying that she could not be allowed to praise traitors who had been righteously punished. Madame Roland turned towards the audience and protested against these words; but insulting clamours were the only response to this appeal, and henceforth Madame Roland was disdainfully silent. She was condemned to death. When she heard the sentence, she said, addressing the Tribunal, in a calm and sweet voice:

'You judge me worthy of sharing the fate of the great men you have murdered: I will try to show on the scaffold the fortitude they displayed.'

Like the Duke of Orleans, Madame Roland was executed immediately after her trial. With her was Simon François Lamarche, ex-manager of the manufactory of *assignats*. She had very fine black hair, a part of which had to be cut, at which she expressed some concern. My grandfather tried to make her understand, with all kinds of circumlocution, that, if he allowed her to retain her hair, he would expose her to the most fearful torture. She seemed touched by his arguments, and paraphrasing a celebrated expression of Molière's, she said, smiling: 'Strange that humanity should take refuge in such an unlikely person as you!' As her black hair was falling, she rose with much vivacity and exclaimed: 'At least leave me enough for you to hold up my head and show it to the people, if they wish to see it!'

Lamarche, who was about to die in her company, was far from having her self-possession. Madame Roland's last act was one of profound abnegation and charity; she forgot her own fate only to think of her companion's sufferings. She never ceased to console and encourage him. She affected gaiety which could not be in a mother's and a wife's heart, but which she hoped might lessen the horror and fear wherewith Lamarche was filled. Neither the Queen nor the Girondins had given rise to such popular fury as Madame Roland. She heard taunts and invectives with a quiet smile. As

to Lamarche, the sight of the guillotine deprived him of the small amount of courage inspired by Madame Roland's words; his face turned livid, and an assistant was obliged to help him up. Madame Roland looked at him with compassion, and said to him:

'I can only spare you the sight of blood; go first, poor man!'

Since the death of the Girondins the public prosecutor fixed the rank and file of execution. Madame Roland, by reason of her sex, had been granted the privilege of dying first. When she told my grandfather that she abandoned to Lamarche the favour of being struck first, he answered that it was impossible; that he had different orders.

'No, no,' replied Madame Roland; 'I am sure you were not ordered to refuse a woman's last request.'

Charles Henri Sanson had not the courage to persist. Lamarche was guillotined, and Madame Roland saw his head fall without a shudder. She then advanced and gave herself up to my grandfather's assistants.

Well-known victims continued to appear on the scaffold. The 21st of Brumaire saw the death of another founder of the Republic—Bailly. The circumstances which preceded and attended his execution were so horrible that some historians, hostile to the Revolution, have grossly exaggerated the facts, while Republican historians have endeavoured to attenuate them. The following account of Bailly's death is, I make bold to say, the most accurate that has hitherto been written:

Jean Sylvain Bailly was born in Paris on September

15, 1731. He was the son of Jacques Bailly, keeper of the King's paintings, and his ancestors were distinguished artists. His first preferences were for literature, but he forsook letters for science, and became one of the most eminent astronomers of the time. Bailly was elected a deputy for Paris in 1789, and the National Assembly selected him as president. On July 16, 1789, he was appointed mayor of Paris; and his popularity was so great that he accepted this perilous post with confidence; but he was not long in discovering his mistake. Being sincerely constitutional, he assumed the responsibility of the terrible butchery, of which the scene was the Champ de la Fédération. It is now pretty certain that, although he held himself responsible, he had no hand in this sanguinary affair; but there was then every reason to think otherwise, and he was on all sides devoted to popular revenge. He resigned his office, gave up public affairs, and retired in the neighbourhood of Nantes. But in that town, as well as in Paris, he was regarded as a traitor; and as his position was becoming more perilous every day, he wrote to a friend, asking for a place of shelter. His friend prepared one for him in the neighbourhood of Melun. Bailly left Brittany, but fell into the hands of a detachment of the revolutionary army, and was taken to Paris. He appeared before the dreaded Tribunal on the 19th of Brumaire. The massacre of the Champ de Mars was not the only charge brought against Bailly; he was also accused of having excited the conquerors of La Bastille against each other, and of having favoured the King's

escape at Varennes. The absurdity of this conjecture was glaring. A considerable number of witnesses were heard; all went against Bailly, and the obvious result was a verdict of guilty, and Bailly was sentenced to death.

I have already stated that the executioner used to call every day on the public prosecutor to take his orders. On the 20th of Brumaire he was told by a clerk of the court that no execution was to take place on that day, and he was dismissed without being apprised of the special preparations of the morrow for poor Bailly's execution. It was only at nine o'clock on the morning of the 21st that Charles Henri was ordered to transfer the guillotine to the Champ de Mars. He lost some time in calling together his assistants, so that it was past ten when he proceeded to the Place de la Révolution. Fouquier-Tinville had selected a spot between the 'Altar of the Country' and the Gros-Caillou for the erection of the scaffold—the very place occupied by the troops when they fired upon the people. On my father devolved the task of removing the instrument of death from its usual quarters. My grandfather gave him his instructions and went to the Conciergerie, where he arrived at half-past eleven o'clock. As he entered the prison he met Hébert, who bowed to him as he passed. Bailly was immediately brought forward. I can assert that the people did not take the initiative in the revolting treatment he met with before execution. The turnkeys of the Conciergerie, who often showed wanton brutality in their dealings with prisoners, treated Bailly with more

than usual violence, and this made my father think that they were acting under orders. As Bailly was bending forward one of the men pushed him violently towards another turnkey, who in his turn hustled him into the hands of another, and so on, until the unfortunate man was bruised and out of breath. Bault, the head gaoler, and Nappier, the clerk of the Tribunal, were present and looked on. Charles Henri having asked Bault why he did not interfere, the latter replied, shrugging his shoulders:

'What can I do?'

Nappier laughed and nodded approval. My grandfather then thought of the individual he had met shortly before, and supposed that Hébert had something to do with what was going on. He was not mistaken, for Bault confessed to him afterwards that the deputy *procureur* of the Commune had excited his subordinates against Bailly.

Seeing that the unfortunate man was helpless, Charles Henri told his assistants to bind his hands. The conduct of the turnkeys had in no way disturbed the equanimity of the illustrious *savant*. His firmness had peculiar good nature about it. He answered the disgraceful jokes of the gaolers merely by the words:

'You are hurting me.'

When the executioner's assistants tore him away from his tormenters, he smiled and said:

'I am rather old for that kind of game.'

When he was pinioned, my grandfather advised him to allow his assistants to throw his coat over his

shoulders, as the weather was chilly. 'Are you afraid that I should catch a cold?' enquired Bailly.

In his 'History of the Revolution,' M. Thiers asserts that Bailly was led to execution on foot: this assertion is inaccurate. The late mayor of Paris enjoyed the privilege of all persons condemned to die; he was taken to the scaffold in a cart. Behind the cart a red flag was attached, which, according to the tenour of the sentence, was to be burnt before the convict by the executioner.

When the cart appeared on the quay a storm of hisses and groans greeted the prisoner, and my grandfather perceived that the mob was chiefly composed of the worst of the *habitués* of the Place de la Révolution. Bailly was seated; he was conversing with my grandfather with extraordinary tranquility. He spoke of everything, except of himself. He questioned Charles Henri concerning the last moments of Custine, Charlotte Corday, and the Queen; shortly after he asked him what his salary was. When the cart reached the Champs Elysées an assistant came in great haste to speak to my grandfather—the carpenters had forgotten some of the beams which formed the floor of the scaffold. Charles Henri was obliged to return to the Place de la Révolution, and to place these beams in the convict's cart. The halt was not without peril; Bailly stepped out of the cart, and twice the crowd attempted to capture him. At length the *cortége* moved on again, but the pieces of wood which were now in the cart caused great inconvenience to poor Bailly. My grandfather asked him if he would rather walk, and he having accepted they

proceeded behind the cart. When, however, the mob saw Bailly again within reach there was another tremendous rush to get at him, and a lad, making his way through the lines, snatched Bailly's coat off his shoulders. The onslaught was so sudden that Bailly fell on his face. The coat was torn into a thousand pieces, and another attempt was made to capture the convict, who was only surrounded by the executioner and his assistants. Bailly, however, was saved from the worst of deaths by the intervention of the gendarmes.

My grandfather hastened to get him again into the cart, but the crowd was raised to frenzy, and a hailstorm of projectiles were hurled at the convict's head. Charles Henri advised Bailly to bend down and shelter himself behind the beams ; but hardly had his head disappeared than the crowd became more violent. Bailly rose to his feet, saying to my grandfather :

'I think you are mistaken ; one should always make head against a storm.' And as Charles Henri was expressing his vexation, he added : 'It would be a pity if I could not die with courage during a quarter of an hour, after learning how to live with honour during fifty-seven years.'

It was half-past one when the cart reached the Champ de Mars. The scaffold was surrounded by three or four thousand men. Charles Henri, seeing the feebleness of his own escort, began to entertain serious fears. He understood that the convict was at the mercy of the howling mob, and hurried towards the scaffold, hoping to conclude the execution before the mob had time to

make a raid upon Bailly. When, however, this was seen at large, public indignation ran high against the executioner, and Charles Henri was surrounded by a gang of thirty individuals, one of whom said to him that the ground which had drunk the blood of martyrs could not be stained by the blood of a rascal—that Bailly could not be executed in the Champ de Mars. My grandfather answered that he was bound to obey superior orders. 'Orders!' exclaimed one of the men; 'only the people have the right to give you orders!' Charles Henri having called an officer of gendarmes to ask his advice, a third individual exclaimed: 'You can proclaim martial law if you like; you have the red flag and Bailly within reach; as for us, we will erect the guillotine in its proper place.'

Loud applause followed this sally, and a scene of indescribable confusion ensued. The gendarmes had dispersed; some helped the people in removing the guillotine. My grandfather was separated from the unfortunate Bailly, and he had the greatest trouble to find him again. It was then that really commenced the torture of the poor old man. By the mud which soiled his shirt and face, and by a wound on his forehead, it was easy to infer that he had been struck by these frenzied savages. Men and women were equally ferocious—some raised their clenched fists over an unfortunate man whose hands were bound; others tried to strike him with sticks over their neighbours' heads. Bailly's face was still calm, but he was very pale; as soon as he recognised Charles Henri Sanson he called

him to his help—poor Bailly's only friend was his executioner. As my grandfather joined him, he said: 'Ah! I hoped all would be over long ago.'

One of the assistants was still by the prisoner's side; the other assistant had disappeared. Two generous citizens, Beaulieu, and a gendarme named Lebidois, came to my grandfather's assistance. Beaulieu harangued the mob, and to a certain degree pacified it. Perceiving that it was dangerous to remain in the same place, and wishing to give some satisfaction to the crowd, he suggested that Bailly should select himself the spot where the scaffold was to be erected. This suggestion was received with enthusiasm, and Bailly was forthwith led away. Beaulieu held one of his arms, Charles Henri Sanson held the other, and the gendarme and the remaining assistants closely followed them. This event has given rise to the invention which represents Bailly being led round the Champ de Mars carrying the boards of the guillotine.

Bailly was taken to the extremity of the Champ de Mars, near the river side, where the scaffold was at last erected. A drizzling rain was falling; Bailly's only garment was his shirt, which was torn, and barely covered his shoulders. The unfortunate man's teeth chattered with cold. It was then that one of those who pressed around him having said, 'You tremble, Bailly!' he made the famous reply:

'My friend, it is because I feel cold.'

So many tortures had not impaired his courage, but his strength at length failed him, his head fell back, and he almost fainted in the executioner's arms, murmuring:

'Water! water!'

A man—a monster I should say—actually threw liquid mud in his face. This outrage roused the indignation of a few, and there rose from the multitude a cry of reprobation. One of the spectators ran to the scaffold and brought back a bottle in which there was a small quantity of wine, which he poured into Bailly's mouth. The old man recovered, and with his beautiful smile said, 'Thank you! Preparations for the execution were now completed, and Bailly was assisted up the steps of the scaffold. 'Be quick, sir; finish me off without delay,' said he to my grandfather. But a formality had yet to be attended to: the sentence said that the red flag was to be burnt by the executioner before the late mayor of Paris. The flag was so wet that much time passed before it could be ignited.

The story which shows the executioner burning the flag under Bailly's nose, and the victim's clothes catching fire, deserves no credence whatever.

These preliminaries tried Bailly's power of resistance, and he was about to faint a second time when my grandfather hurriedly pushed him towards the weigh-plank. While he was strapping him, he kept on encouraging him. Charles Henri then rushed to the rope, and Bailly was heaving a deep sigh of relief when the knife came down and severed his head.

On the 24th Brumaire another man who, like Bailly, had taken a brilliant part in the first movements of the Revolution, Louis Pierre Manuel, passed away from this life. Unlike Bailly, however, he was anything but

resigned to his fate; he struggled with the executioner's assistants, and uttered piercing shrieks, which only the fall of the knife interrupted. General Brunet, commander-in-chief of the Army of Italy, was executed on the same day.

The task I had to fulfil in the relation of the dramas of this bloody epoch ends here. My grandfather's diary now begins.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CHARLES HENRI SANSON'S DIARY.

Brumaire 26.—Executed to-day, Citizen De Cussy, of Caen, who had taken part in the conspiracy of the federalist deputies, and with him Gilbert de Voisin, late president of the ex-parliament, who, having emigrated, was imprudent enough to return to Paris. During the toilet somebody said aloud that if Cussy, who was an adept in coining gold and silver moneys, was about to be guillotined, it was a certain sign that the Republic wanted no other money than paper. After these two came Houchard, formerly general of the Army of the North, who, like an old soldier, did not tremble.

Brumaire 27.—Forgers still give us plenty of work. To-day I led two of them to the Place de la Révolution. Forgery is a misfortune which endangers the lives of many innocent persons. Forgers are so clever that it is difficult to distinguish bad from good paper, and many people who have been deceived cannot resist the temptation of inflicting upon others the loss they have sustained. This evening I met in the Rue de la Tixeranderie a gang of women who were going to the Commune

—they wore the red cap; a large crowd followed them, giving cheers which were much like groans. I followed the example, and walked behind the women, for I wanted to know what they intended to complain of. Having met Citizen Nicolas Lelièvre, he took me into the Hôtel-de-Ville. The women also entered, but neither their costume nor their petition were to the taste of Citizen Chaumette, who spoke to them very sensibly, and sent them back to their homes.

Brumaire 28.—This morning we went to the Conciergerie. As I was waiting in the prison parlour, two citizens, who were about to be interrogated, passed through the room; one of these, who I was told was Citizen Boisguyon, a soldier, approached me, and with great demonstrations of politeness, he said to me:

'Is it to the citizen executioner I have the honour of speaking? Is not your scaffold like a ball-room, citizen, and does not the knife, like the violins, begin operations in such a way as not to leave time for two words?'

I gave an affirmative answer.

Then turning towards his companion he said to him: 'You see, Dupré, that I was right, and that you acted your part very badly. We must ask Fouquier-Tinville to allow the citizen executioner to come and superintend our rehearsals.'

The gendarmes led them away, but I heard them laughing. The speaker alluded to a parody of capital punishment which had become the chief amusement of the prisoners.

Executed on this day a late deputy of the Constituante, Nicolas Remi Lesueur, of Saint Menehould, and an old soldier who had recruited for the enemy.[1]

Brumaire 29.—Two convicts, Distar de Bellecour, officer, and Charles Duparc, late *employé* at the Tuileries. Nothing particularly interesting.

The 'Section de l'Unité' to-day, Brumaire 30, took away the remnants of the superstition of the Abbey of St. Germain des Prés to the Convention. I saw the procession. At the head of it marched a party of soldiers, then came men wearing sacerdotal vestments over their clothes, and between two files were women and girls dressed in white with tricolour sashes; lastly, I saw hand-barrows wherein were placed vases, pyxes, candlesticks, gold and silver plates, and a box of relics, studded with precious stones. The procession was followed by a band which played the tune of 'Malbrouk' (*sic*). This booty, it is said, is worth two millions.

The Tribunal has given us a holiday; such occasions are rare.

Frimaire 1.—We went to take away poor Citizen Boisguyon, who the other day had made fun of the guillotine. When he was brought to me he said:

'You are in earnest to-day; you will be astonished to see how well I can play my part.'

With him were Girey-Dupré, Brissot's accomplice; he had had his hair cut before being tried, and had appeared before the Tribunal in proper toilet for the

[1] Francois Prix, *alias* Saint-Prix.

scaffold. He said, turning round several times before me: 'I hope I am all right.' He was very cheerful. A forger of assignats, Colombier, was also to die. They all three took place in the same cart. The forger was in consternation; he tried to prove to Citizen Boisguyon that he was not guilty. The latter attempted to console him, and said:

'If my dying twice, instead of once, could save you. I would willingly submit to the experiment, for death is of very little consequence to me; but since this is impossible, keep your reasons for the Lord, in whose presence we shall be two hours hence.'

As we were crossing the Rue St. Honoré, two women appeared at a window of Duplay's house, where Citizen Robespierre lives. Girey-Dupré, who was showing the house to Boisguyon, cried at the top of his voice:

'Down with Cromwell! down with the dictator! down with the tyrant!'

Juglet, the officer of gendarmes, tried to silence him, but in vain.

Colombier was executed first, Boisguyon came next. He was quiet to the last. When Girey was on the platform he wanted to address the people, but we had orders to prevent him, and we took hold of him. He cried several times '*Vive la République!*'

Frimaire 4.—We executed Antoine Colnelle de Tontel, late lieutenant-colonel, and Clément Laverdy, formerly superintendent of finances, convicted of having contributed to famine by throwing corn into a pond—nasty day's work. The first-mentioned convict was

seventy-two years old, and the other seventy. Both died with courage.

Frimaire 6.—Yesterday the Tribunal tried the individuals accused of having given false evidence; two of the accused were acquitted; the third, Carterau Desormeaux, was condemned to death and executed to-day.

Frimaire 7.—Bread is scarce in town; one must wait for hours before the bakers' shops before one can get some. The women crowd before the shops in the evening, and sometimes wait all night. This sight should be very distressing, but our compatriots turn everything into fun. This evening over five hundred persons were waiting before the baker in our street; although the weather was very chilly, they were singing and laughing. Unfortunately this gaiety is frequently attended with disorder and misconduct, and there are husbands who complain. To-day the Tribunal sent to death Jacques Étienne Marchand, lieutenant of gendarmes; General Nicolas Pollier-Lamarlière; and Étienne Alexis Jacques Anisson, formerly director of the national press.

Frimaire 9.—Five heads fell to-day: two were those of celebrated men, Barnave, and Duport du Tertre, who had been minister of justice. It is said that Citizen Danton tried to save Barnave, but with the new law the denunciation of a child is enough to forfeit a man's life, and no earthly power could save him. Yesterday I saw Citizen Fouquier as he was entering court. The execution was appointed for to-day, but the sitting ended late, and the weather was so bad that it had to be put off to

the next day. At eleven o'clock, Barnave, Duport, Citizen Benoît-Grandel—sentenced for writing '*Vive le Roi!*' on an assignat—Citizen Vervitch and his sister, were brought in to be cropped. Barnave and Du Tertre were very brave and quiet. The former came up to me, held out his hands, and said:

'Bind these hands, which were the first to sign the declaration of the rights of man!'

When he was ready, and while Citizeness Vervitch, who was in tears, was being bound, he went up to Duport and spoke to him with animation. Two carts had been provided: the late deputies entered one, with me; the three other convicts occupied the other cart, with Henri.[1] On the way Barnave and Du Tertre went on conversing; they spoke of the Republic, and pretended that its forthcoming ruin would kill liberty altogether. Many cries rose around the carts: one man said to Barnave, in a tone of mockery:

'So young, so eloquent, so brave! what a pity!'

And Barnave answered very proudly: 'You are right, my friend!'

Citizeness Vervitch was executed first; she was carried to the platform half dead with fear. Her brother followed her, then came Benoît-Grandel, Duport, Du Tertre, and Barnave. The latter looked at the guillotine and exclaimed:

'And this is my reward for the good I have done to my country!'

[1] The narrator's son.

Frimaire 10.—This morning I had to take two cart-drivers from the Conciergerie to the Place de la Révolution. I had not, as yesterday, to deal with great citizens, but the quantity made up for quality, for there were five in one cart and four in the other—nine in all. In this number I saw a mother and a son. We had to use violence to separate them. When the mother saw her child's hair falling, her shrieks became so heartrending that we could hardly bear to hear them. She spoke to us, saying that the Republic should be content with her head, and that the young man should be reprieved. It was too much for me. Henri took charge of the first cart, and I went in the other cart, but on the way, despite the noise, I could hear the woman groaning and weeping. The convicts who were in my cart turned away, not to see her. The women in the crowd wept, and many loudly expressed their pity. On the Place, and although she was very faint, she burst out again. The son kept on saying that he was glad to die with his mother. She suffered first, and on the platform she told me: 'I am sure he is to be reprieved.'

I think she had an idea that her son had been brought with her merely to frighten her, but that he was not to be executed. I thought it was of no use to contradict her.

Frimaire 11.—Executed Jean Vincenot, innkeeper; Pierre Nicolas Aubry, schoolmaster; and Sebastian Mauduit, wine merchant.

The prettiest woman in Paris came forward to act as our new divinity—Reason. I read in a paper, yester-

day, that the goddess is likely to be like a general without soldiers.

Frimaire 12.—Two convicts this morning: Barthélemy Soudre, bootmaker, and Guillaume Jean Flament They were much insulted and laughed at.

Frimaire 13.—Executed Antoine Pierre Léon Dufresne, doctor, for conspiring against the Republic, and Étienne Pierre Garneau for the same crime.

To-day a decree of the Commune has been made known, which enumerates the requisite qualifications for a certificate of civism. To obtain such a certificate is now more difficult than to enter Paradise. One must show that one has been a member of the National Guard since 1790, produce receipts of patriotic contributions from 1791 to 1792; one must have held only one situation for the last two years, &c., &c. Citizen Chaumette is more exacting than St. Peter.

Frimaire 15.—Another deputy has been sent to the guillotine—Kersaint, formerly of the navy. He died bravely, as he had lived. Prayed on the way. A rebel priest, Baptiste Guérin, was executed with him.

Frimaire 16.—To-day, as I was going to the Conciergerie to take Jacques Auguste Rassay, Bernard d'Escourt, and Charlotte Félicité Lappé, the citizen prosecutor asked me to wait. Rivière, the turnkey, told me that they had just arrested Citizen Rabaut Saint Étienne, and his brother Rabaut Pommier, and that Fouquier had immediately ordered the first, who was outlawed, to be identified. The two Rabauts were concealed in the Rue Poissonnière, at a citizen's employed

in the offices of the Committee of Public Safety. This citizen had caused to be constructed in his room a wall which so entirely concealed the apartment in which the two brothers were concealed, that it was next to impossible to find them. But he was foolish enough to employ an upholsterer who was working in the offices of the Committee. When he heard Billaud, Amar, and Vouland, who spoke of nothing but death and massacre, the upholsterer became frightened; he thought his life was in jeopardy, and he revealed the secret to Amar, who immediately directed the two brothers to be arrested. Half-an-hour after, the gendarmes returned with Rabaut Saint Étienne and Tirasse. Rabaut was handed over to me without more ado. He died with the greatest pluck.

Frimaire 17.—Madame Dubarry was sentenced to death last night, and executed this morning. We arrived at the hall of justice punctually at nine, but we had to wait, as the convict was with Citizen Denizot, judge, and Citizen Royer, who were taking down her confession. At ten o'clock Citizens Vandenyver, who were three in number—the father and the two sons—all accomplices of Madame Dubarry, and Citizen Bonnardot and Joseph Bruniot, forgers, were brought in. While the above named were being 'arranged'[1] Madame Dubarry came in; her legs could hardly carry her. It was some twenty years since I had seen her, and I

[1] By 'arranged' the executioner means that his victims were being made ready for the scaffold. The expression is too characteristic not to be translated literally.—N. ED.

could hardly have known her. Her features had become coarse. When she saw me she shrieked, covered her eyes with her hands, and sank down on her knees, crying: 'Do not kill me!'

She rose to her feet again: 'Where are the judges?' she exclaimed; 'I have not confessed everything; I want to see them!'

Citizens Denizot and Royer were talking with two or three deputies who wished to see the poor woman; they came forward and told her to speak out. She said she had concealed several objects of value in her country house at Luciennes, but she sobbed and broke down at every word. Citizen Royer, who held the pen, kept on saying, 'Is that all?' and tried to make her sign the *procès-verbal*, but she pushed the paper away, saying that she had something to add. She perhaps thought that, in reason of the immense wealth she was giving up, she might be reprieved. At length Citizens Denizot and Royer rose, and said she must submit to the decision of her judges, and make up by her courage for the ignominy of her past life. One of my assistants approached and attempted to cut her hair, but she offered resistance, and the other assistants had great difficulty in binding her hands. She at last submitted, but she cried as I never saw a woman cry before. As many people crowded the quays as when the Queen and the Girondins were executed. Many cries were raised, but her shrieks were louder than any. She said: 'Good citizens, free me! I am innocent; I am of the people,

good citizens, do not let them kill me!' No one moved, but men and women hung their heads, and silence prevailed at last; I never saw the people in a more merciful humour. Jacot's grimaces and taunts were of no avail. Dubarry was so faint that my son had to support her. She often spoke to me, begging for mercy. I was more moved than any one, for this unfortunate woman reminded me of my young days, of the time when I knew her, of her worthy father. . . . When she saw the guillotine she became quite excited, and struggled with my assistants and tried to bite them. She was very strong, and three minutes elapsed before they could carry her up to the platform. She was frightful to look at, and to the very last second she struggled. The others were executed after her.

Frimaire 18.—To-day we guillotined Jean-Baptiste Noël, deputy of Les Vosges, outlawed. On the way he spoke of Madame Dubarry, and asked me if the knife had been well cleaned, because it would be disgraceful that a republican's blood should mingle with that of a prostitute. A forger of assignats was executed with him. To-day Clavière, ex-minister, stabbed himself in his cell.

Frimaire 20.—Executed six public purveyors for fraud.

Frimaire 21.—It is no easy matter to get shoes now-a-days. The Convention has decided that shoemakers shall henceforth work for the defenders of the country only. Two convicts to-day.

Frimaire 22.—Citizen Chaumette pursues women of

loose life with energy. He ought to begin by allaying public misery, which leads them into the life they lead. To-day we had to deal with two of these women, named Claire Sevin and Catherine Loriot.

Frimaire 23.—Executed one of the great lords of the defunct Monarchy, the *ci-devant* Duc du Châtelet. He did more harm to the Monarchy than its most inveterate enemies. The King gave him the command of the French Guards, in lieu of Biron; Du Châtelet treated them so severely that he facilitated the work of those who were trying to disaffect the soldiers. He was carried to the prison parlour, for in the night he had attempted to destroy himself: having neither knife nor dagger, he tried to kill himself with a sharp piece of glass, but the glass broke, and only made a slight wound; then, thinking that he could die by losing all his blood, he cut his breast several times with the piece which still remained in his possession, but he only succeeded in weakening himself so that his legs could not carry him. Nevertheless, his heart was firm. I proposed in the cart to bind his wounds, and thereby prevent the blood from flowing, but he answered:

'Never mind; it's only saving you work!'

He recovered some strength in the Place de la Révolution, and cried '*Vive le Roi!*'

Frimaire 25.—Two men—François Xavier Bruniau, an ex-royalist magistrate; and Pierre Charles Jacques Pouchon, an *émigré*.

Frimaire 26.—The servants of Montmorency, who has emigrated, were executed to-day.

Frimaire 28.—Executed to-day three priests and two *ci-devants*.

Frimaire 31.—The Club des Jacobins continues its purification. It has excluded noblemen and financiers. Antonnelle and Dix-Août,[1] members of the jury; Royer, substitute of the prosecutor; Barrère, Dubois-Crancé, Montant,[2] and many others must be in a predicament. A Jacobin certificate is now more valuable than all possible documents. To-day, as I was passing before Chrétien's café, I was hailed by Citizen Geoffroy, a journalist. I think he must have been very drunk, for he treated me with familiarity, and asked me to drink with him.

Nivôse 1.—I have begun the month by taking three convicts to the guillotine—a priest and two women. These were Julien d'Herville, priest and Jesuit; Marie Anne Poulain, a nun; and Marguerite Bernard, Anne Poulain's servant. They lived together in a house of the Faubourg d'Orléans. The priest said mass in one of the rooms, and several old women came every day to hear it. The local committee had suspicions; it sent a woman to Citizeness Poulain, who told the latter that she knew a priest was concealed in the house, and asked that he should call on her husband who was dying.

[1] Dix-Août, a juror of the Tribunal, was, in reality, the Marquis Leroy de Montflabert. As his title and name were obnoxious to republican ears, he changed it into the date of a great republican victory, which he took as a name.

[2] All these *révolutionnaires* more or less belonged to the aristocracy. Barrère was not of noble descent, but had married the Marquise de Vieuzac, whose name he added to his to distinguish himself from the members of his family bearing his name.

Poulain denied that a priest was in hiding in her apartment, and told Julien d'Herville not to go, as she knew that the visitor was republican. But the priest would not listen to her, and was arrested in the house of the creature who had wanted to betray him.

Nivôse 2.—Only one execution to-day.

Nivôse 3.—It appears that Collot d'Herbois, on mission at Lyons, has discarded the guillotine, because it only kills one man at a time, and taken to shooting enemies of the Republic wholesale. A deputation of Lyonese citizens have denounced these doings to the Convention; but their brief has been ill received. Robespierre spoke first; he began by thundering against the aristocracy; but he concluded by proposing that local committees should appoint delegates in order to seek the means of setting at liberty the patriots who might be under lock and key. This is something, and people are grateful for what Robespierre has done.

Nivôse 4.—Madame Dubarry's confession did not save her life, but forfeited that of two persons. This morning I executed Jacques Étienne Laboudie, formerly of the navy, and Denis Morin, Madame Dubarry's valet-de-chambre, sentenced to death, the first for high treason, the second for having concealed money and jewels belonging to the nation. Two other persons, a woman and a plebeian, were executed in their company.

Nivôse 5.—Five executions to-day: Étienne Teyssier, high treason; Michel Kurtz, Pierre Vetzel, Michel Bourg, and Bernard Hourtz. The four last named were Alsa-

tians. With the exception of Bourg, who encouraged his companions, all were frightened. It is curious that those whose life is the most tedious and plodding should regret it more than others who have far more reason for caring for it.

Nivôse 6.—Executed a dishonest baker, Nicolas Gornot, of the Rue St. Jacques. All the citizens of his section were around the scaffold and insulted him. With him, Prevost Lacroix, captain in the navy, and Jean Marie Allard, curate of Bagneux. . . .

Nivôse 9.—Dietricht, formerly mayor of Strasburg, was guillotined to-day. While I was binding him he said:

'You have already guillotined many good republicans, but none that were more devoted to the country than I am.'

He was calm and very plucky. He said more than once that his dying wish was that Alsace should never be separated from France. He cried '*Vive la République!*' on the scaffold.

Nivôse 10.—Last month, at the bidding of the prosecutor of the Commune, I had been ordered to remove the blood which oozed through the boards of the guillotine. A hole had been made which had been covered with a trellis-work. But the blood dried too rapidly and could not be absorbed by the earth, and an unbearable smell came from the pit. Last night I directed my assistants to dig deeper. It is said that Chabot, member of the Convention, who was lately arrested, poisoned himself, but that his sufferings were so great that he

could not bear them any longer; he called for help, and he has still a few days to live.

Nivôse 11.—Another general of our armies died to-day on the guillotine. Biron had been sentenced yesterday. This morning I led him to the Place de la Révolution. He was in the head-turnkey's room, and was eating oysters with much appetite. On seeing me, he said:

'Allow me to eat this last dozen of oysters!'

I answered that I was at his orders, which made him laugh; and he said:

'No, *morbleu*! it's just the other way; I am at yours!'

He finished his repast with wonderful tranquillity, joking with me, and saying that he should arrive in the other world in time to wish a happy new year to his friends.[1] He was cool to the end. On the way a soldier called out to him:

'Farewell, general!'

Biron answered:

'Good-bye, comrade!'

The soldier was neither beaten nor insulted. Since Madame Dubarry's death citizens are milder with the convicts. If all cried and struggled as she did, the guillotine could not last.

Nivôse 12 (1st of January in the old style) *and Nivôse* 13.—Executed Charles Marie Barré, one of those who conspired against the unity of the Republic; Pierre

[1] The 11th of Nivôse was the last day of the year of the old calendary.

François de Foller, Charles Louis de Faverolle, nobleman; Agathe Jolivet, a gentlewoman; and Pierre Joachim Van Clemput, priest.

Nivôse 14.—Three women and two men, all belonging to the nobility, were executed to-day.

Nivôse 15.—This morning I gave thirty sols for a copy of the 'Vieux Cordelier,' Camille Desmoulins's paper. It is the fifth number. The number of copies issued was not equal to the demand. Hébert has found a master; and everybody wants to read the tremendous drubbing Camille Desmoulins gives him.[1] Since so good a patriot as Desmoulins has dared to speak of clemency, every face looks happier. It is pretty certain that Danton, Camille's friend, is behind him, and that between them they will put down those who wish the Republic to be baptised on the guillotine every morning.

Meanwhile executions continue. To-day we guillotined the son of Custine; it had been said yesterday that he would be acquitted, and his conviction has taken everybody by surprise. After him, Citizen Ladevize, formerly knight of St. Louis, was put to death.

Nivôse 16.—To-day we executed General Luckner. He was seventy-two years old, and quite broken by age; but he was brave to the last, and died bravely.

Nivôse 17.—To-day I led to the guillotine three individuals of the same name, and yet they were not related to each other. Were they brought together by a mere chance, or was it a joke of one of the secretaries

[1] In the numbers alluded to above, Desmoulins attacked Hébert with extraordinary power and wit.—N. ED.

of the prosecution, some of whom are young enough to laugh at what is not funny at all? Their names were Camille Sapi Suschi Bologne, formerly a marquis, and an officer in the army; Jean-Baptiste Bologne, non-commissioned officer in the French Guards; and Nicolas Vincent Bologne, formerly vicar of Bicètre. The *ci-devant* marquis was seventy-eight years of age. With them, Marie Louise de Camp, wife of Gilbert Grassin, gentleman.

Nivôse 19.—Executed Jean Mandrillon, late functionary of the executive power, convicted of treason, in complicity with Brunswick and Dumouriez; Claude Augustin Imbert, member of the Convention, guilty of having fabricated spurious passports; and Catherine Bethringer, convicted of treason.

Nivôse 20.—Marie Aimée Leroy, wife of Joseph Faucher, and Joseph Girouard, printer.

Nivôse 23.—Adrien Lamourette, constitutional bishop of Lyons, was put to death to-day. He showed that he did not fear death. He was much insulted on the way; he blessed the people without showing any bitterness or resentment. People cried to him, in alluding to his speech of July 1792:

'Embrace Charlot,[1] Lamourette; come, embrace Charlot!'

Lamourette turned to me, and said:

'Yes, I embrace in thee humanity; however mad and furious it may be, it is always humanity.'

[1] 'Charlot,' for Charles. This contraction of Charles Henri Sanson's Christian name is still generally applied to the executioner in France. —N. ED.

And, in effect, he did embrace me, just as he was about to be strapped to the weigh-plank. After him Jean Joseph Durand, ex-president of the revolutionary committee of Montpellier, was put to death.

Nivôse 27.—Jean Pierre Thiellard, tradesman; Charles Hollier, vicar of the constitutional church of Bordeaux; and Pierre Ducourman, lawyer, were executed this morning. In the cart the three convicts sang a song they had composed in prison. Their singing excited the anger of the people, who threw mud in their faces. Firmness does not mollify all citizens, but rather irritates them, as red irritates bulls. Some convicts return the taunts, and then it is worse. I have already witnessed really disgraceful scenes. Tirasse spoke of the matter to Renaudin, asking that Fouquier should give orders to the gendarmes, and that Jacot, my assistant, should be dismissed. Fouquier answered that he had no time to waste over such futilities. Renaudin has promised to speak of the matter to Robespierre.

Nivôse 29.—This day has seen the condemnation and execution of the nephew of a man who had much reason to complain of the old *régime*—Jean Vissec, Baron de Latude.

Pluviôse 2.—A year since to-day we executed the King. This morning my wife was so pale and tired when she awoke that I guessed that her sleep had been troubled. She knelt down to pray, and I did the same. . . . I had to lead four to the scaffold to-day—Jean Thibault, labourer; Marc Étienne Quatremère, merchant; Jean Marie de l'Écluse, lieutenant in the navy; and

Bernard Sablès, merchant. The town was merry, on account of the anniversary of the death of the King. The streets were full of citizens, who sang patrotic choruses. We reached the Place, and as L'Écluse was going up the steps loud shouts were heard. The members of the Convention were coming through the garden. The public, unasked, opened its ranks before the deputies; but the latter neither advanced nor returned on their steps. A committee of Jacobins had asked the Convention that a deputation of its members should join the Commune in a pilgrimage to the tree of liberty in commemoration of the day. The motion had excited great enthusiasm, and the Assembly rose in a body to join the *cortége*. No doubt they had no idea of the surprise Citizen Fouquier had reserved for them. Many deputies, when they saw the cart, tried to go away; but the people pressed around them, thereby obliging them to witness the execution. The tumult was so great that the convict L'Écluse stopped on the steps and turned round. The assistants stood motionless, and I myself did not care to outrage the majesty of the deputies of the nation by such a sight. Cries of 'Proceed with the execution!' were raised, and we did our duty. The head of the naval officer fell, and his three companions suffered after him. The thump of the knife was greeted with tremendous applause.

Pluviôse 3, 4, 5.—Thirteen executions of minor individuals.

Pluviôse 13.—Yesterday I returned from Bric, where

our country house is. The three days I passed there leave me no desire to return to the place. The word 'fraternity' is inscribed on the mairie, but it is not inscribed on the hearts of the inhabitants. While the poorest in Paris sacrifice whatever they possess, while the most relentless sometimes behave with real generosity, the inhabitants of the country only think of enriching themselves. The sale of the national domains, far from satisfying them, has only excited their cupidity. The law awards death to monopolisers. Were the law carried out, a guillotine should be erected in every village; for almost every peasant conceals his corn, for fear of being compelled to take it to market, and receive assignats in payment. There are, it is true, revolutionary committees in almost every village; but the peasants understand their own interests, and they never denounce each other. They form a secret association, which defies the decrees of the Convention, and which is the real cause of famine. The patriotic vigilance of the said committees is only exercised at the expense of those who are rich enough to be envied. Thus several rich inhabitants of Coulommiers, two of whom I know, were brought to Paris, judged and executed to-day, under pretext of a conspiracy which never existed.

Pluviôse 16.—The jurors of the Revolutionary Tribunal are not very scrupulous as to whom they condemn, and on their side the prisoners care little for life. Never were people more regardless of existence. Formerly, when I used to enter a prison, my appearance frightened the boldest: now among the prisoners I meet in the

passages and parlour of the prison, not one seems to think that to-morrow, perhaps, I may call for him. There are some who smile when I appear. These smiles produce a singular effect upon me. Experience has made me callous, and I can bear the horror with which we executioners are regarded; but to get accustomed to people who almost say 'Thank you' when they are led to the guillotine, is more difficult. My hand could not have remained firm if it had still to carry out such sentences as the former *régime* were wont to inflict. Judges, jurors, prisoners seem as if they were taken with a kind of delirium of death. When shall all this end? A prisoner asked me the other day: 'What could I do in order to be guillotined immediately?' Those who manifest such impatience perhaps are not the pluckiest. There are others who remain calm and cool, as if they had yet a hundred years to live. Such was Montjourdain, commander of the St. Lazare battalion. During six weeks of incarceration in the Conciergerie he did not betray the slightest sign of fear or sadness. When he was informed that his time was come, he composed a song. He was taken to the scaffold with one Courtonnet, and both kept on joking and laughing up to the last minute.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CHARLES HENRY SANSON'S DIARY—continued.

Pluviôse 17.—To-day we executed some ladies of quality. They showed almost as much tranquillity as Citizen Montjourdain. Their names were: Marie Gabrielle Lechapt, widow of the Marquis de Rastignac, convicted of having sent money to her son, who had emigrated; the *ci-devant* Marchioness de Marbœuf, convicted of having accaparated provisions; and with her Jean Joseph Payen, farmer of Madame de Marbœuf; and two forgers of assignats, Nicolas Armand and Jean Renaud. On the way Madame de Marbœuf exhorted Payen to die courageously. She said to him:

'After all, my poor fellow, it is just the same whether we die to-day or twenty years later.'

'If it is just the same,' answered Payen, who was not at all resigned to his fate, 'I would rather die in twenty years.'

Pluviôse 19.—This day, Elisabeth Pauline Gand, wife of Count de Lauraguais; Louis Pierre; Madame de Lauraguais's steward; Pierre Joseph Petit, constitutional curate of Ménil, guilty of corresponding with the enemy;

and Nicolas Pasquin, formerly Princess Elizabeth's valet, were executed.

Pluviôse 22.—Couthon had, it appears, made more noise than harm at Lyons. He threatened very loudly, but his threats killed no one. Things considerably altered after he was superseded by Collot and Fouché. Collot eschewed the guillotine, which he thought was not sufficiently expeditious, and executed with cannon, and thus put to death over two hundred persons every day. Robespierre and Couthon are indignant at this butchery. The Convention governs the Republic. It is itself governed by a dozen sanguinary leaders, who obey the orders of the Club des Cordeliers; so that Hébert, who is the big gun of the Cordeliers, can say with reason that he is the real sovereign of the people. All this is sad enough. The Tribunal to-day sentenced six nuns. We executed them immediately after their trial.

Pluviôse 23.—Executed Anne Henriette Bouchevain, Baronne de Vaxence, and François Amable Chapuy, lieutenant-colonel of the fifth battalion of Saone-et-Loire.

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Ventôse 1.—Ronsin, general of the revolutionary army, and Vincent have been set free. What is strange is that it is Danton who obtained the discharge of these two violent men. Ronsin strides about the streets with his old airs. His presence dispels all hopes of clemency; and it has given rise to the rumour that another government is to be established. This government is to have for principal object the acceleration of revolutionary

justice. Ronsin is to be the head of the government; under him is to be a military tribunal, composed of a high judge, a prosecutor, and four judges. A council, called the Conseil Antique, is to take the place of the Convention. I need hardly say that very few people believe in this absurdity. To-day executed François Gerbaut, merchant, and a deserter named Gossenot.

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Ventôse 6.—Jean Jacques Dortoman, formerly general in the Army of Italy; Thomas de Maussion, a nobleman; Joseph Canel, a hairdresser; and Barbe Smith, a woman, were executed to-day.

Ventôse 8.—Wood, which was dear enough last month, is unapproachable now. The cold is intense. A month ago planks of the guillotine were stolen; this morning, on our way to the Conciergerie, we found a man stretched out on the pavement; he wanted to fetch some water from the river, had fallen on the quay, and had not the strength to get up. He told us that he had not eaten for two days. We had three cart-loads of convicts to-day, fifteen in all—men, women, noblemen, priests, and merchants.

Ventôse 10.—Robespierre is ill, and the Cordeliers have it all their own way. Yesterday they declared that Citizens Camille Desmoulins and Fabre d'Eglantine should be impeached: they also make the best of the sufferings of the people, which are great; they accuse the Convention and speak of doing again what was done on June 2. What shall we become if they have the best of it? Since the guillotine is at the order of the

day, its inventors are always thinking of modifying it. Over twenty suggestions to that effect have been presented to the revolutionary committee, but they were so absurd that only one of these has been reserved for consideration. The plan consists in a trap opening near the weigh-plank, into which the body falls, a device which prevents accumulation on the guillotine. Citizen Vouland, of the Convention, was present when the experiment was made. It did not succeed, the two bags of sand which were used for the purpose having failed to enter the trap. Citizen Vouland asked for my opinion. I said that the proposed alteration was full of danger; that if the trap did not close better than it opened, the executioners or the convicts might fall through it with the corpses. He expressed his concurrence in this view, and the proposed alteration was shelved.

We guillotined five persons to-day—four men and one woman.

Ventôse 13.—The Revolutionary Tribunal settles old accounts with country citizens. Two carts were sent to the guillotine to-day. All the convicts were peasants. A very unfortunate accident happened. Only one convict remained, all his companions having been executed before him; as he was being strapped down, my son Henri, who was attending to the baskets, called me and I went to him. Larivière, one of the assistants, had forgotten to re-raise the knife, so that when the weigh-plank was lowered with the convict Laroque strapped upon it, his face struck the edge of the knife, which was

bloody. He uttered a terrible shriek. I ran up, lifted the weigh-plank, and hastened to raise the knife. The convict trembled like a leaf. The mob hissed us, and threw stones at us. In the evening Citizen Fouquier severely reprimanded me. I deserved his blame, for I should have been in my usual place. Citizen Fouquier saw I was very sorry, and dismissed me with more kindness than I expected. Thirteen executions.

Ventôse 15.—The Cordeliers proclaimed insurrection in their sitting of yesterday. I see no symptoms of emotion in the streets; gatherings are neither more numerous nor more turbulent than usual. If this goes on, the Père Duchêne (Hébert) may perhaps learn by experience what the sensations of the guillotine are. On the other hand, the people of the guillotine,[1] who are just as much the people of the Club des Cordeliers, were inflamed by the speeches they had heard. Never have convicts been more hooted than those of this morning were. Cries of 'Pitch them into the river!' were heard for the first time. The utmost consternation prevails throughout the prisons, with the exception of the Conciergerie, for those who are prisoners have very little hope, whatever may occur. The convicts of this morning were a father and his two sons; Guillaume Saint-Souplet, Anne Michel, and Anne Claude Saint-Souplet, aristocrats. Three other convicts also suffered.

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Ventôse 17.—Guillotined, at three o'clock in the afternoon, Claude Compart, general inspector of the

[1] The narrator means the usual attendants of executions.

post-office; Jacques Marie Duchêmin, secretary of the Prince de Condé; and Gilbert de Grassin, gentleman.

Ventôse 18.—A foreigner, who, as well as I could guess by his accent, was an Englishman, called on me to-day, and forthwith proposed to give me a neat sum if I would include him for one day among my assistants. I had all sorts of reasons to be surprised at the proposal; I enquired whether what he wished to do was out of hatred against the French. He answered that he did not care much either for France or for the French, but that his motive was the satisfaction of curiosity; that he had come to Paris to see a revolution of which the whole world was speaking, and that, before going, he wished to see an execution as closely as possible. I then tried to impress on him that his curiosity might bring him into trouble, that we were at war with his country, and that if he were identified he would certainly be taken for a spy and treated as such; in short I flatly refused his proffer. He listened to me with much coolness, and when I had done speaking, he answered that his mind was made up, and that, 'in spite of me,' he would go on the scaffold.

I could not help saying to him:

'Take care you don't go there in spite of yourself.'

He left me, saying, '*Au revoir.*'

To-day we had two executions: Louis Desacres de Laigle, Count and Marshal; and Anne Alexandrine Rosalie de Larochefoucauld.

Ventôse 20.—Ronsin's and Hébert's party has attempted to raise the Commune. They asked that the

Declaration of the Rights of Man should remain valid until the Republic had exterminated her enemies. They were listened to; but no one stirred, not even Chaumette. It is said that Ronsin made a scene after the sitting, and tried to strike the prosecutor of the Commune. The fate of the Hébertists is as good as sealed now. It was even rumoured this morning that most of them had been arrested.

Ventôse 24.—Ronsin, Vincent, Hébert, Momoro, Laumur, Ducroquet, and Ancard were arrested last night. The details of their conspiracy were frightful. It is said that they proposed renewing the massacres in September.

Ventôse 26.—We had a terrible day's work to-day. In yesterday's sitting, the Tribunal passed sixteen sentences of death. I was ready at two o'clock yesterday; but Citizen Fabricius told me that, as it was raining fast, it was more advisable to delay execution until the next morning. This morning, then, I went to the Conciergerie with four carts. All the convicts were natives of the department of La Nièvre, who had taken part in an insurrection. The execution lasted thirty-two minutes.

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Germinal 1.—The trial of Hébert, Vincent, and the other Cordeliers commenced this morning. It is said that it cannot but last several days. This is a respite for me, at least. Two men suffered to-day. On returning from the Place de la Révolution, Citizen Fouquier ordered me to remain in permanency so long as the trial of the Hébertists should last; so I entered the justice hall,

and heard what was going on. Twenty accused were seated in a row. Hébert was very pale, and could hardly answer when he was spoken to; Ronsin and Momoro seemed to defy the judges. The wife of Quétineau, who was executed the other day, is among the prisoners—no one knows why. Rivière told me that, during the first days of their incarceration, they quarrelled together. It was Anacharsis Clootz who made them understand that these disputes were of no good. When Hébert was brought into the prison, those who had been arrested before him jeered him; but Ronsin defended him, and a collision ensued between the latter and a man named Collignon. Hébert and his partisans now turn their backs upon their other companions. Kock, the banker, in whose house they used to feast, will share their fate, He said he would give a last dinner to his friends before their death.

Germinal 3.—Henri took my place to-day on the scaffold. I remained in permanency in the Tribunal. Hébert and Vincent are much discouraged. Ronsin does not flinch; and Clootz is sad, but very calm and dignified. He has written a pamphlet entitled, 'The Universal Republic,' in which he said that he was the personal enemy of God. He also said that the world would join France, and adopt republican institutions. This pamphlet has been used against him; and Renaudin said to him that it was only written to render the coalition of crowned heads against France plausible. Clootz answered:

'I cannot be suspected of being a partisan of kings; it would indeed be extraordinary if a man who would

be burnt at Rome, hanged in England, and quartered at Vienna, were guillotined in Paris.'

Clootz is a sincere madman who deserves a shower bath, and nothing more. And then the ways of the Tribunal are so singular that they excite interest on behalf of all those who appear before it, whoever they may be. Thus I heard the President upbraiding Clootz for being a born Prussian, and for being rich; this is so unjust that it verges on stupidity. The trial will go on to-morrow.

Germinal 4.—The execution took place to-day. The trial was resumed at ten o'clock this morning. President Dumas made a terrible speech, and the jurors retired to deliberate. At about half-past twelve they delivered their verdict. Nineteen of the prisoners were sentenced to death; one only, Citizen Labourreau, medical student, was acquitted. Citizeness Jeanne Latreille, wife of the late General Quétineau, declared she was pregnant, and obtained a provisional reprieve. The judgment must have been written beforehand, for hardly half-an-hour after it was delivered criers were reading it around the Palace of Justice. Their execution was to be immediate. Fouquier said: 'Each second of their existence becomes an outrage to the majesty of the people.' I sent off some men to the Place de la Révolution. Henri hurried to the Rue François-Miron, where the carts were ready. He returned with the same rapidity, and an hour and a half after the declaration of the verdict the prisoners were brought forward. They were eighteen in number—Jacques René Hébert, a man of letters, and

before the Revolution *employé* of the Théâtre de Variétés; Charles Philippe Ronsin, formerly a journalist, more recently general of the revolutionary armies; Antoine François Momoro, printer; Nicolas Vincent, formerly lawyer's clerk; Michel Laumur, general; Jean-Baptiste Anacharsis Clootz, journalist and member of the Convention; Pierre Jean Proly, editor of 'Le Cosmopolite;' Conrad Kock, banker; Jacob Pereira, vice-president of the 'Section du Bon-Conseil;' Armand Hubert Leclerc, *employé* in the war-office; François Desfieux, wine merchant; Jean Antoine Florent Armand, medical student; Jean-Baptiste Ancard, manager of the arsenals; Frederic Pierre Ducroquet, commisioner of the government; Antoine Descombes, commissioner of the government; Jean Charles Bourgeois, member of the committee of surveillance of war; Pierre Ulric Dubuisson, commissioner of the executive power; and Albert Mazuel, commander in the army. I was talking with Richard, the turnkey, when I was apprised of the arrival of the carts. I went to see that everything was right, and while I was examining the carts I saw, under a red cap drawn far down over the face of the wearer, a fair beard which I had never seen among my assistants. The man tried to walk away, but I soon identified the Englishman who had called on me the other day. He had given money to the assistants, and had obtained of them what I had refused, thinking that I would not point him out on the way to the scaffold. But I was not less obstinate than he was. We had five carts. I pretended to take him for what he gave himself to be, and I ordered him to

take one of the carts back to my house. He hesitated, and was about to speak; but I looked in the direction of the gendarmes and he reluctantly obeyed; not, however, without making me a grimace which signified, '*Au revoir.*' Ronsin came forward first; his mien was calm and proud. Clootz also was quite cool, and in no way disturbed; he continued his apostleship, and preached to his companions, asking them not to belie their principles, assuring them that the guillotine was the ultimate end of their tribulation, that the guillotine was the end of everything; and begging them to give to the world the sight of a republican death. His voice was hardly audible, for the convicts continued to accuse each other. As Descombes's lips were silently moving, Clootz supposed that he was praying, and upbraided him for his cowardice. Vincent was not so bold as during the trial. Hébert came in, supported by two turnkeys; he had scarcely strength enough to raise his legs. He was elegantly dressed, as was his wont, with a watch in each fob, but his attire was disordered; his face was as livid as if the knife of the guillotine had already passed through his neck; he wept, and drops trickled down his forehead. So much cowardice was unpleasant to behold. Ronsin was highly indignant; he did not look at his former friend, and said to Momoro: 'We staked our heads, we lost the game, we must pay with courage and firmness.' The toilet began, and as I had six assistants, it only lasted a few minutes, and the signal for departure was given. There were so many people outside that we could hear the noise and murmur of the crowd. We

emerged through the court of the prison. When the public saw the eighteen convicts there was a tremendous shout. This time every window was open and thousands of heads peered out. What is rather curious is, that the rascals who usually escort us and who used to be Hébert's friends were the most violent against him to-day. The 'Père Duchêne' was particularly insulted; but Hébert heeded not; he was half dead with terror. When we passed before Duplay's house, the crowd cheered lustily, as if to thank Robespierre for ridding France of unprincipled rascals like Hébert. Fouquier, out of compassion for Clootz, had ordered that he should be executed first. Clootz, however, refused; he wished, he said, to fortify himself in his disbelief in second life, and urge to the last upon his companions to do the same; and he added that the privilege given him was one which one always had the right to decline. There was a dispute on the matter, but the clerk told me to let him have his own way. Descombes was guillotined first; then came Mazuel, Bourgeois, Armand, Leclerc, Dubuisson, Ducroquet, Kock, Ancard, Pereira, Desfieux, Laumur, Proly, Vincent, Momoro, and Ronsin, who was extremely courageous. When only Clootz and Hébert remained, I told my assistants to take Hébert. He exclaimed in a weak voice: 'Not yet!' Clootz heard him, and rushed forward crying: 'Hurrah for the fraternity of nations! long live the Republic of the world!' After him, Hébert was at length strapped down. I believe he fainted away while this was being done. I made a sign to Lariviére, who was holding the rope; but either he

did not see me or he wished to indulge the sanguinary rage of the mob against the 'Père Duchêne,' for he did not obey. I rushed forward, took the rope out of his hand, and pulled it myself. Enthusiastic cries of '*Vive la République!*' were uttered when Hébert's head disappeared in the basket.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CHARLES HENRI SANSON'S DIARY—continued.

Germinal 5.—Everybody looked pleased yesterday. A rumour had spread that Citizens Robespierre and Danton had made peace; that one had demanded the execution of Hébert and his friends as a token of reconciliation, while the other asked for the heads of the great royalist conspirators, of the deputies accused of malversation, and of Chaumette and Simon, arrested on Ventôse 28, but that after these executions the Tribunal should be ordered to measure real justice. This was one of the reasons for which such an enormous multitude was out yesterday. This morning there was as much alarm as there was confidence yesterday. It was said that, far from thinking of making it up with Danton, Robespierre had only struck his enemies in order to strike Danton himself. Our democracy is very much like a despotism, for those who exercise power cannot resign themselves to share it with others. One of the jurors, Naudin, was saying to Sellier: 'To walk behind Robespierre, Danton is too tall by a head.' It is also said that Danton, on being warned of the danger which threatens him, answered: 'They would not dare; I am

the holy ark; and if I supposed that Robespierre thinks of arresting me, I would eat his heart.' I think he is mistaken. The only holy ark, nowadays, is the guillotine. It is as difficult for a tribune as for a king to know the real sentiments of the people. The people admires the great demolishers, but their admiration has something of terror. Danton speaks and acts like a man, Robespierre like a prophet: the empire shall always belong to prophets. The man with the blue coat[1] has already his devotees; the wife of Desmorets, my assistant, recites prayers before a portrait of Robespierre; a good many women do as she does. However zealous in the discharge of its functions the Tribunal may be, the prisons are nevertheless full to overflowing. To-day we executed three natives of the department of Allier, sentenced for speaking against the Revolution. Two were brothers; the third was the son of one of them.

Germinal 6.—To-day we led to the scaffold Jean Louis Gouth, formerly constitutional bishop of Autun and member of the Constituent Assembly; the two brothers Balleroy Charles Auguste and François Auguste; the former was a marquis and a lieutenant-general, the second a marshal; Denis Joisel, servant of Monsieur, the King's brother, and Etienne Théry. The latter had usurped the title of representative of the people, with the mere object of obtaining gratis a good dinner in an inn. His assumption has cost him his life.

Germinal 7.—It is said everywhere that the Com-

[1] Robespierre.

mittees are discussing the arrest of Danton. In my humble judgment, big dogs are preparing to bite, for curs bark too boldly. Valate, a terrorist, is reported to have said yesterday: 'Before a week Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and Philippeaux will be arrested.' If they are taken, it will be their own fault, for the rumour is public. But one cannot run away when one's name is Danton. Executed a man and a woman: Claude Marie Lambertye and Henri Moreau, convicted of conspiracy.

Germinal 8.—Jean-Baptiste Peusselet, formerly a monk; Jacques Pernet, captain of dragoons and general in the service of Bavaria, suffered to-day.

Germinal 9.—The Hébertists were sold by a man named Laboureau. He called his former friends rascals, and was discharged by the Revolutionary Tribunal for his pains. The day before yesterday Laboureau went to the meeting of the Jacobins; Legendre, who presided, complimented him and congratulated the Tribunal on its equity. Poor Citizen Legendre, you may get to know to your cost what this equity is! Executed Jean-Baptiste Collignon, printer; Jean-Baptiste Courtin, abbot of the Order of Cluny; Nicolas Jean Adam, monk; Antoine Meffre, monk; Louis François Poire, one of Talleyrand's servants; and Jacques Harille, merchant.

Germinal 11.—Citizens Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Lacroix, and Philippeaux were arrested to-day and taken to the Luxembourg. Seven executions yesterday and to-day.

Germinal 12.—Citizen Legendre, member of the

Convention, has not been arrested with Danton, as was rumoured yesterday. Richard, of the Conciergerie, has received orders to prepare No. 4, the cell formerly tenanted by Hébert, and the other cells occupied by his companions. These preparations show that Danton and his friends will be transferred to the Conciergerie this evening or to-morrow at the latest, and that their trial will take place immediately. Such prisoners are not easy to keep. To-day we guillotined Euloge Schneider, formerly a priest, who was prosecutor of the Revolutionary Tribunal of Strasburg. He used openly to turn the Terror to his profit—that is to say, to the profit of his vices; he went about Alsace with his tribunal, his guillotine, and my colleague of Strasburg, obliging the inhabitants to illuminate their houses when he passed, levying contributions, passing capital sentences, and inciting to plunder, theft, &c., wherever he stopped. One of his friends named Tunck wishing to marry, he required the attendance of all the girls of Barr, and allowed him to choose in the lot; and to complete his kindness, he ordered the executioner to collect money around the scaffold for the bride and bridegroom.

Soon after, he felt a desire to establish himself also, and at one o'clock in the morning he sent a peremptory order to a citizen of Barr to bring him his daughter, who was young and handsome. The unfortunate man dared not refuse. On the following day he returned to Strasburg with the poor child, in a carriage drawn by six horses. But Citizen Saint-Just had arrived during his absence, and Schneider was arrested on the

same day, exhibited during three hours on his own guillotine, and sent off to Paris in the evening, there to be tried. This terrible Schneider has been very humble and small in my hands. He was a broad-shouldered, thick-necked man, well knit, and as strong as a bull; his face was sinister and altogether repulsive. He tried to joke, and spoke jocosely of the thickness of his neck; but he could not go on; tears came to his eyes, and a tremor shot over his frame. On the Place de la Révolution, he called me 'Sir, sir, sir!' not knowing what he was saying. Before him, Louis Simon Collivet, grocer; Charles Brochet de Saint Priest, nobleman; and Charles Victor François de Sulabery, nobleman, were executed.

Germinal 13.—Citizen Danton and his friends have been transferred to the Conciergerie. Their trial is to take place to-morrow. The trial of the deputies charged with malversation is to take place at the same time. Fifteen men in all.

Germinal 14.—Executed Jean Masquet, cattle-dealer, and Étienne Jacques Armand de Rougemont, nobleman.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

TRIAL OF DANTON, CAMILLE DESMOULINS, WESTERMANN, &c. &c.

CHARLES HENRI SANSON'S notes contain no information on the trial of the Dantonists. This trial, however, my grandfather must have followed with the greatest interest. In some parts of his diary it is easy to detect his conviction that the result of the struggle between Danton and Robespierre would be to increase or diminish the number of capital sentences delivered by the Revolutionary Tribunal. No wonder that he should have been interested in this phase of the history of the Revolution. My father told me that Charles Henri was present at almost every sitting of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and related to his family all that he had seen and heard. It is perhaps owing to the emotion which he felt then that the present gap in his diary is to be ascribed.

The Danton affair is, however, of such importance that it may not be amiss to say a few words on it before we recur to Charles Henri Sanson's diary.

Whatever opinion may be held of Danton, one cannot but recognise that his overthrow was the great event of the revolutionary period. Until then the Revolution

had only struck those who might be regarded as her enemies. The impeachment of the celebrated tribune was the first blow aimed at the upholders of the Republic; little by little the revolutionists tore, mangled, and destroyed each other; and finally the intervention of a Barrère or a Tallien was enough to consummate the ruin of the republican edifice.

As was said before, Camille Desmoulins, Danton, Philippeaux, and Lacroix were arrested in the night of the 11th of Germinal. It has been said that Robespierre was adverse to this measure, but this is far from true. His personal interests were concerned in the arrest of these four men, and he afterwards betrayed his hatred for Danton and his friends by making a speech against them in the Convention. Danton, at the time, was the noble exponent of generosity and clemency. If he had all the vices of a powerful and exuberant nature, he also had high qualities; he was disgusted at judicial massacres, and, after looking on in silence, he had spoken out and expressed his real sentiments. Public opinion had therefore identified his views with the sublime pages in which Camille Desmoulins gave vent to his patriotic grief and indignation. The natural consequence was that the fanatics who thought that blood alone could cement the revolutionary edifice, considered the death of these two men indispensable to the realisation of their dreams. As to Robespierre, his views were, it appears to me, more profound. Cruelty was not in his nature; it was one of the necessities of his policy. He was too sagacious not to be aware that real popularity

would belong to those who should speak of clemency; and Robespierre no doubt wished to reserve this popularity for himself. Danton spoke of clemency before him; that was his only crime.

Danton made no show of resistance when he was arrested. As to Camille Desmoulins, he opened his window and called for help against tyranny when the soldiers entered his room. No one answering his appeal, he resigned himself to his fate, took some books, embraced his young wife and his child, and allowed himself to be led off. Philippeaux and Lacroix were arrested without any difficulty. On the day after their incarceration the four prisoners were permitted to walk in the courtyard, where the inmates of the prison met. Camille was dark and sad, Lacroix was disheartened, Philippeaux was calm and resigned, Danton was just what he usually was, cheerful and full of power of repartee. The news of the presence of these powerful men had spread like wildfire in the prison, and all flocked to see them. A few prisoners even forgot that Danton and his friends were amongst them for taking up their cause, and insulted them. A *ci-devant* said, pointing to Lacroix, who was tall and strong: 'He would make a fine coachman.' Danton smiled contemptuously. Somebody having enquired how he, Danton, could have been deceived by Robespierre, he answered that, after all, he would rather be guillotined than guillotine. Tom Payne was a prisoner in the Luxembourg at the time; Danton shook hands with him, saying, in English: 'I am glad to meet you, friend; what you have done for the happiness and liberty of

your country, I have in vain striven to do for mine. I have been less fortunate, but no guiltier than you. They now send me to the scaffold: such is my reward.'

When the four prisoners received the act of impeachment drawn up against them, Camille Desmoulins foamed with rage, Philippeaux raised his hands to heaven, Danton laughed and rated Camille for his want of callousness. He went up to Lacroix and asked him: 'Well, what do you think of this pretty document?' 'I think we had better make ready to meet Sanson,' answered Lacroix.

Danton was in hopes of moving the public on the day of trial; and his expectations were certainly not over sanguine. The report of his arrest and that of Camille, who was very popular, had produced a sensation. On the 11th and 12th many persons were assembled near the walls of the Luxembourg, and my father told me that they looked at the prison with astonishment, as if they expected to see it crumble down, like a new Jericho, at Danton's bidding. Camille's soul was more tender and poetical than Danton's. He thought of his young and charming wife, and of his baby son. His wife passed her days in the garden of the Luxembourg, and he tried to catch a glimpse of her through the bars of the prison window. He recovered his powers as a writer, and began his last number of the 'Vieux Cordelier,' his final denunciation of tyrants. He also wrote to his wife a really magnificent letter, which has been reproduced by the historians of the Revolution. Danton and his friends were transferred to the Conciergerie on the 13th, and were immediately brought

before the Revolutionary Tribunal. The jurors had been carefully chosen, and it was notorious that not one of them was favourable to the prisoners. Four other members of the Convention, charged with malversation, were included in the charge. These were Chabot, Delaunay, Bazire, and Fabre d'Eglantine. The accusation made out against them was never proved. Other prisoners were tried at the same time. There were thirteen in all; but Fouquier discovered that some had been forgotten, and the number was raised to fifteen.

The decision of the jury was a foregone conclusion, and the debates of the trial have been so often described that there is but little need to relate them at length. All the accused displayed stern bravery, knowing well the fate that was reserved for them. But none equalled Danton in eloquence and vehement denunciations of his enemies. His attitude was superb, and before him the judges and jurors shrank back and trembled. His tremendous voice could be heard outside the court, and it became so evident that the people would rise to deliver him if he were allowed to continue, that the President of the court ruled that the prisoners should be removed from the hall of justice while their fate was being decided. The whole trial, in fact, was a shameful parody of justice; and when a verdict of guilty was brought in against all the accused with the exception of one, no one for a moment doubted that Danton and his friends were the victims of a cruel and relentless policy.

I now leave my grandfather to speak for himself.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

CHARLES HENRY SANSON'S DIARY—continued.

Germinal 16.—By the order of Citizen Fouquier, I remained in the vicinity of the Tribunal all day yesterday. The hall of justice was so crowded that I could not gain admittance. I arrived at nine o'clock this morning at the Conciergerie. As I passed the threshold, a gendarme tapped me on the shoulder, and said to me: 'You'll have plenty to do to-day;' and Rivière added: 'They are all sentenced to death.' He was mistaken, as I found out afterwards, for Citizen Luillier was acquitted. He was so inoffensive and obscure that no one thought of him. Richard's lodge was crowded with people who wanted to see the prisoners. As I was crossing the courtyard, Wolf, one of the clerks, told me to follow him upstairs. Citizen Ducray and two other clerks were writing; and Fabricius Pâris, the head clerk, was walking up and down the room. His eyes were very red; he was deadly pale, and he trembled like a leaf. When he saw me, he said: 'I am going away.' Ducray turned round and said: 'Will you sign?' 'No, no, once more,' replied Citizen Fabricius; 'I would rather burn my hand than sign.' He went

away with tears in his eyes. I was not surprised, for I knew him to be a great friend of Danton's, and his pluck pleased me. Fouquier-Tinville, who is a cousin of Desmoulins, had not the same scruples. Lescot-Fleuriot, deputy-prosecutor, and two other functionaries entered the room. Lescot asked me whether my carts were ready. I replied that they were. He then ordered me to go down and wait, which I did.

I had been waiting for a considerable time, when a gendarme came to tell me that I was wanted by Fouquier-Tinville. I found a good many persons in his closet—old Vadier, Amar, Coffinhal, Arthus, Herman, among others. Although Fouquier was present, I received the order of execution from the hands of Lescot. He told me that the convicts had rebelled against the Tribunal; that they would probably offer new resistance; that to prevent any mishap they would be introduced one by one; that I should have to seize them immediately, and pinion them. Fleuriot added that if the convicts attempted to excite the people on their way to the scaffold, I was to go at a trot, and make all haste. He also recommended extreme celerity in the execution itself, observing that the sooner the 'ruffians' died the better. After this, a discussion arose as to the number of carts required. I had ordered three out. Lescot said that one was sufficient, and Coffinhal observed that only one should be used. I objected to this, and obtained two carriages.

I then proceeded to the parlour, which was full of

gendarmes and soldiers. They formed two thick ranks. Half-an-hour elapsed before one of the convicts appeared. This was Chabot. He looked very ill. He was surprised at finding himself alone, and murmured: 'Where are the others?' He was pinioned, and his hair was cut. Bazire was the next to appear. Chabot rose, and, running up to him, exclaimed, with tears in his eyes: 'My poor, poor Bazire, it was I who brought you to this!' Bazire pressed him in his arms, without a word of reproach.

The two Freys, Delaunay, member of the Convention, the Abbé d'Espagnac, and Disderiksen were led in after Bazire. After these, Philippeaux, Lacroix, Westermann, and Fabre d'Eglantine. Two turnkeys supported the latter, who was ill. During the toilet, Fabre said he wished to speak to Fouquier. One of my assistants called a clerk, who said this was not possible. Citizen Fabre then became angry, and cried: 'You ought to be satisfied with murdering me, and not steal my property! I publicly protest against the infamy of the members of the Tribunal, who have stolen from me a MS. comedy, which had nothing to do with the trial.' Lacroix and Philippeaux were calm.

Fabre was still speaking when a noise was heard in the passage. We recognised the voice of Citizen Danton, and there was a dead silence. His words came out like a torrent. I distinctly heard him say to the clerk who wanted to read out his judgment: 'Be d—d, and your judgment with you! I won't listen to it! What a

farce!' He thundered away, and all seemed to recoil before him. But when he saw the other convicts, his demeanour altered completely. He assumed a cold, indifferent air, and calmly walked up to me. He sat down, and tore away his collar, saying: 'Do your duty, Citizen Sanson.' I cut his hair myself. It was thick and hard like a mane. Meanwhile he went on speaking to his friends: 'This is the beginning of the end; they'll guillotine the representatives wholesale. Committees governed by a Couthon without legs, and a Robespierre. . . . If I could leave them mine, they might go on for some time. . . . But no; France will awake in a cesspool before long.' Shortly after, he exclaimed: 'We have accomplished our task. Let us go and sleep.'

Citizens Hérault de Séchelles and Camille Desmoulins were led in next. The former gave no sign of emotion; the latter spoke of his wife and child in heartrending terms. As soon as he saw us, he was seized with a tremendous fit of rage. He rushed upon my assistants, and struggled with them like a giant. All his clothes were torn in the scuffle. Four men had to hold him down on the chair. His friends tried to soothe him—Fabre with soft words, Danton with a tone of authority. The latter said: 'Leave these men alone! What's the use of fighting with the servants of the guillotine? They are only doing their duty. Do yours.'

At length everything was ready. Ducray headed the *cortége*. The members of the Convention and General Westermann occupied the first cart, in which I

and Henri sat down also; four assistants were in the second cart with the other convicts. The escort was as numerous as that provided for the Queen and the Girondins. Danton stood in the first rank, behind me; next to him was Hérault de Séchelles; Fabre, Camille, and Philippeaux were behind. Chabot was the only one who sat down. He had tried to poison himself, and suffered much. Bazire stood next to him, and spoke to him words of tender friendship.

As the carter whipped his horse Danton exclaimed: 'The idiots! they'll cry "Long live the Republic!" In half-an-hour the Republic will be without a head!' Fabre d'Eglantine was inconsolable about his comedy, which he said was in verse; upon which Danton laughed, and said to him: 'Verses![1] you'll have enough of them in a week, and we too.'

As we reached the quay, Camille Desmoulins became very furious. 'Do you not recognise me?' cried he. The Bastille fell at my bidding! Come to my help, republicans! Do not let them murder us!'

His cries were received with groans. His fury increased, and we had to threaten to tie him to the side of the cart if he did not remain still. Danton, who clearly saw that the people who surrounded them would not rise to free them, said to Camille in a strong voice: 'Be quiet, be quiet! do not hope to soften this vile rabble.' And Lacroix: 'Be calm; think rather of commanding respect than of exciting pity.'

[1] *Vers* in French, and as far as euphony is concerned, means *worm* as well as verse.

Danton was right: there was no hope for them. The escort was surrounded by the usual attendants of the guillotine, and they shouted so that it was impossible for the public at large to hear what the prisoners said.

Passing before a café we saw a citizen, seated on a window-sill, who was drawing likenesses of the prisoners. The latter looked at him, and murmured: 'David, David!' Danton raised his voice, and cried: 'Is that you, valet? Go and tell your master how soldiers of liberty can die.' Lacroix also spoke to him violently. David went on drawing. Doors, windows, and shutters were closed in Duplay's house (where Robespierre lives). When the prisoners saw the house, they aimed sarcasm over sarcasm at its walls. 'Vile hypocrite!' said Fabre. 'The coward is hiding himself, as he hid on August 10,' cried Lacroix. Danton's voice rose louder than any. His face was purple, and his eyes glistened like burning coals. 'You shall appear in this cart in your turn, Robespierre,' he exclaimed, 'and the soul of Danton will howl with joy!'

Danton was the same to the last: passing without transition from the most violent anger to the greatest calmness; at times brutal, at others sarcastic, and always firm. As we came in sight of the scaffold his colour slightly altered. The attention with which I looked at him seemed to displease him, for he elbowed me roughly, saying: 'Have you not a wife and children?' I replied that I had. He then resumed with impetuosity: 'So have I. I was thinking of them.' And I heard him

murmur: 'My wife, I shall not then see you again! My child, I shall not see you!'[1] But a few seconds after he was himself again.

Delaunay, Chabot, Bazire, the two Freys, Gusman, Disderiksen, and D'Espagnac died first. When Camille Desmoulins was on the platform he asked me to do him a last favour, which was to take a lock of his hair and send it to his mother-in-law. He then stepped towards the weigh-plank without resistance. Fabre, Lacroix, Westermann, Philippeaux suffered next. Westermann cried several times, '*Vive la République!*' Hérault de Séchelles came next, and Danton with him, although he was not called. My assistant had already seized Séchelles, when Danton advanced to embrace him. But it was too late. Danton looked on while his friend was being executed, with such coolness as does not belong to man. Not a muscle in his face moved. He seemed to defy not only the fear of death, but death itself. The weigh-plank was hardly lowered when he advanced. I advised him to turn round while the body was being removed. He shrugged his shoulders contemptuously. 'Do not forget to show my head to the mob; they have not often seen one like it!'

When, according to his last wish, Danton's head was shown, there were cries of '*Vive la République!*' but not many.

The cemetery of La Madeleine, where are the King, the Queen, and the Girondins, having been closed, the

[1] Madame Danton was enceinte when her husband was put to death.

fifteen corpses of the Dantonists were taken to the small cemetery which has just been opened near the Barrière Monceaux.

I went to the Palace of Justice to take orders for to-morrow. Met Desboisseaux and Vilate, two jurors. They wanted to know how Danton had died. I related what I had seen. 'It is not astonishing; he was drunk,' exclaimed one of them. I assured them that Danton was not drunk at all; upon which they called me a traitor and a blackguard, and went away in a passion.

Germinal 17.—I did to-day what Citizen Desmoulins asked me. I got the address of his father and mother-in-law, at his house in the Rue de la Comédie, and went to No. 17 Rue des Arcs. Of course I did not go up. I sent for the servant, without telling her who I was, and said that, being present at the execution of Citizen Desmoulins, he had asked me to hand a locket to the mother of his wife. I then departed; but I soon heard steps behind. The servant came up, saying that Citizen Duplessis, Camille Desmoulins' father-in-law, wished to speak to me. I answered that I was in a hurry, and that I would return another day. But at that moment Citizen Duplessis himself came up. I told him what I had said to the girl. He answered that I must have something more to say to him; and he insisted so much that I could not but follow him. He lived on the second floor. We entered a richly-furnished room. He showed me a chair, and sat down. Hearing the cry of a child, I turned round and saw a cradle in the corner of the apartment. Citizen Duplessis ran up

to the cradle, and took out a child, who looked unwell. He showed him to me, and said: 'It is his son.' He kissed the baby, and said, with an effort: 'You were there—you saw him?' I nodded my assent. 'He died like a brave man—like a republican, eh?' I answered that Camille's last words had been for those he loved. After a pause, he suddenly turned pale, and wringing his hands: 'And my poor daughter, my Lucille!' he exclaimed; 'will they kill her, as they killed him?' And he expressed his grief in heartrending terms.[1] A cold shudder crept over me. M. Duplessis walked to and fro, clenching his fists. As he was passing before a bust of Liberty on the mantelpiece, he threw it down, and furiously broke it to pieces. I was grieved and awed, and found no words of consolation for the poor old man. There was a ring at that moment, and an elderly lady, whose handsome face was pale with despair, entered and threw herself into the arms of Citizen Duplessis, crying: 'Lost! she is lost! She is to appear in three days before the Tribunal.' It was Madame Desmoulins' mother. I was seized with terror at the thought that I might be recognised by a woman in the loss of whose happiness I had a finger; and I ran away, as if I had committed a crime.

Germinal 18.—A generous citizen presented himself yesterday before the Convention, and offered to defray all the expenses of the guillotine. Executed seven men and four women to-day.

Germinal 20.—Desmoulins' wife is at the Conciergerie with her so-called accomplices. They are to

[1] Madame Desmoulins had been arrested.

appear to-morrow before the Tribunal, with Citizen Chaumette and several others.

Germinal 23.—To-day we put to death Claude Souchon, formerly general in the army of the Pyrenees. He was a very brave man, and he died crying : '*Vive la République!*'

CHAPTER XL.

CHARLES HENRI SANSON'S DIARY—continued.

Germinal 24.—The trial of the wife of Citizen Desmoulins was concluded to-day. Her despair was intense when she arrived at the Conciergerie. It was at first thought that she was insane, and some hoped that she might be saved on account of her diseased mind. But she recovered her wits during the trial, and her fate was soon sealed. With her were tried a batch of *révolutionnaires*, among whom were Chaumette and Arthur Dillon, ex-count, and general of the Army of Ardennes, and Hébert's wife.

When the last hour came, Madame Desmoulins appeared dressed in her best attire Madame Hébert cried much, and Madame Desmoulins tried to console her. As she was stepping into the cart, Dillon approached her. She told him that she bitterly regretted being the cause of his death. Dillon answered that it was not her fault, and he expressed his grief at the sad fate of so young and so charming a creature. Madame Desmoulins interrupted him: 'Look at me,' she exclaimed, 'and say whether my face is that of a woman who needs consolation. My only wish, since Camille's death, has been to

join him; this wish is now about to be accomplished. If I did not detest those who have condemned me, because they murdered the best and most honest of men, I would bless them for the boon they now confer on me.' She then bade farewell to Dillon. Dillon was in the first cart, Madame Desmoulins in the second, with the Grammont-Nourrys, Lacroix, Lapalu, Lassalle, and Madame Hébert. On the way she talked with the last two citizens, who were very young—Lapalu was twenty-six years of age, and Lassalle twenty-four. She spoke so gaily that she made them smile more than once. Their conversation was troubled by the tears of Madame Hébert, and by the two Grammonts, who kept on quarrelling with each other. The son charged the father with having caused his death. In his rage the young man called his father a ruffian. 'Sir,' said to him Madame Desmoulins, 'it is said that you insulted Marie Antoinette on the way to the scaffold; you should have preserved some of your audacity for to-day.' She died without even turning pale. Dillon cried '*Vive le Roi!*' Grammont the elder wished to embrace his son, but the latter would not let him.

Germinal 25.—This morning I sent some hair of Madame Desmoulins to her father and mother. I gave the parcel to a Savoyard who did not know me, and directed him to take it to M. Duplessis' house, for I did not care about going there again. To-day we executed a nobleman, Jacques Antoine de la Barbière de Refluet, and three individuals of lesser importance.

Germinal 26.—Charles Mathias Dalençon de Neu-

ville, ex-count; Marie Jeanne de Lescale and Victoire de Lescale; Marie Constance Galley, nun; Aimé Courradin de Lanone; Louis Étienne Brevet de Beaujour, barrister at Angers; Jean-Baptiste Lareveillière, president of the tribunal of Maine-et-Loire; Louis Diensic de Mizaugé, ex-count; and Jean François Antoine Tissier Ducloseau, magistrate, were executed to-day.

Germinal 27.—Hugues Louis Jean Pelletier de Chambure, master of the post-office at Arras; François Constant Cassegrain, ex-curate of Pithiviers; Jacques Huet, hairdresser; Pierre Laville, shoemaker and member of the revolutionary committee of the section of the Tuileries; and Paul Lapeyre, surgeon, were guillotined to-day.

Germinal 28.—A great deal is said of a new decree which is about to be issued on the proposition of Citizen St. Just, outlawing all foreigners and noblemen who should be found in Paris two days after the issue of the decree. No one could help smiling at the alleged conspiracy of Danton, Hérault de Séchelles, and Camille Desmoulins—the said plot has now become an article of faith in which one must believe or die. In a private conversation with Vadier, Dufourny tried to play the part of St. Thomas; Vadier forthwith denounced him at the Club des Jacobins, and at the requisition of Robespierre he has been expelled from the Club. He can consider himself lucky in getting off so easily. The other day I witnessed the arrest of a poor artisan because he said that Danton was a good fellow, and a better man than St. Just. To-day we led to the guillotine seven convicts,

Jérémie Baudot, monk; Jacques Pierre Chalot, curate of Marsal; Julien Decous, curate of Nouvillac; Charles Tibault Acor, Hippolyte Mermin, Pierre Louis Henry, and Hector Simille, tradesmen and labourers.

Germinal 30.—Since Dumas has succeeded to Herman as president of the Tribunal, trials take place in larger numbers, a prodigy which was thought impossible. Seventeen persons were sentenced to death yesterday; I executed them this morning. This execution was one of the most lamentable in which I ever took a part. The women were in a majority. Several among these women had their children in the carts. Jacques Joseph Laborde, banker; Arthur Gustave Geneste, banker; Pierre Haringue de Guibeville, nobleman, late president of the parliament of Paris; Marie Haringue de Bonnaire; Marie Charlotte de Bonnaire; Marie Louise de Charras, of Angoulême; François Mesnard de Chouzy; Sebastien Rollat, nobleman; René Rollat, officer; Louis Georges Gougenot; Anne Marie de Mesle, wife of Marshal de Mesle; Ange-Michel de Bellecourt, officer in the Russian service; Jeanne Marie Nogués, wife of Bellecourt; Marguerite Anne Gouvel; Jean Robin, Guibeville's valet; and François Mathieu Payma, servant of the younger Madame de Bonnaire—all convicted of conspiracy against liberty. The sight was affecting in the extreme, for the women cried and moaned.

Floréal 1.—The Tribunal has judged, in the name of Revolution, those who used to judge in the name of Justice, and to-day I led to the guillotine the same magistrates whose sentences I was wont to carry out. I

had been much moved on seeing them leaving the Tribunal, to the number of twenty-five of the parliament of Paris and provincial parliaments, advancing in a file, the presidents first, and the others behind them, grave and austere as if they had been going to some ceremony. When they were brought to the Hall of the Dead, and when President Bochard de Sarron held out his hands to me, I trembled, and could not help showing consternation; whereupon the president said to me:

'Do what the law orders. Even an unjust law is a law.'

In the cart, and before the guillotine, they retained the same attitude: no tears, or reproaches, or clap-trap bravery. They died with the serene pride of the old Romans, who waited for the Gauls.

Floréal 2.—The Jacobins have been engrossed with a mighty affair. The tax-collector of their section thought that patriotism had nothing to do with the payment of rent, especially when this rent was to go into the coffers of the State; he therefore wrote to the committee of the Club asking for what was due to the nation. Indignation was great at this audacity, and Collot d'Herbois asked that the misdemeanant should be sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal. The times have, then, returned when great lords used to throw their creditors out of the windows—with this difference, that the window is now a loop-hole, and is called a guillotine. Six executions to-day.

Floreal 3.—Great citizens, good and righteous men, now appear uninterruptedly on the guillotine. Those

who govern should understand that this daily butchery cannot but become hateful, and disgust the population. The fellows who usually follow my carts, ferocious as they are, are getting milder, and, as to the good citizens, they now close their doors and windows as soon as I appear in the street with the convicts who are to suffer. To-day we had to deal with Citizen Lamoignon de Malesherbes, the King's former defender; he was arrested at his country-house, with all his family. President de Rosambeau, executed the day before yesterday, was his son-in-law. His daughter and granddaughter were executed with him to-day. After his arrest he was incarcerated in the Port-Libre; on arriving there he met one of his former clerks, who exclaimed: 'What! you here, sir?' 'Yes, my friend,' answered Malesherbes, smiling; 'I am becoming a scamp in my old age, and that is why they put me in prison.' D'Esprémenil, who was so famous in the old parliament of Paris, was also among the convicts. He had recanted his republican opinions, and had defended royalty as warmly as, at first, he had attacked it. After August 10 he was badly beaten and wounded by a party of insurgents who recognised him. Péthion having come to his help, D'Esprémenil pointed to his wounds, saying: 'And I, too, M. Péthion, used to be the people's idol.' Malesherbes was firm and even cheerful. As I approached him he was winding up his watch; he continued to do so, saying: 'One moment, friend.' When his hair was cut, and his hands tied, he asked me to put his wig on his head again, not, he said, because

he was afraid of catching a cold, but because he disliked cold weather. He then went up to Chateaubriand, his granddaughter's husband; the latter sank down on his knees, as also his wife and Madame de Rosambeau, Malesherbes' daughter, and they received his blessing. He stumbled in descending the staircase of the Conciergerie, and nearly fell; upon which, speaking to his children, he said: 'This is what one may call a bad omen; a Roman would go in again.' His children sat near him in the cart; their conversation was very touching: they assured the old man that they were only too happy to die with him. Malesherbes answered with the utmost coolness, and was firm to the end. D'Esprémenil was next to Le Chappelier, also sentenced to death, who, in the Constituent Assembly, had been his most obstinate opponent. As we were starting, the latter said to his companion: 'Sir, in a few seconds we shall have the solution of a terrible problem.' 'What problem?' 'That of knowing who of us two will be hooted by the mob!' 'We shall be hooted both,' answered D'Esprémenil. With the above died Jacques Geoges Thouret, member of the Constituent Assembly; Frederick Hill, commissioner in the department of Bas-Rhin; Dolphine Antonine de Rochechouart, Duchess du Châtelet, Béatrix de Choiseul, Duchess of Grammont, Marie Victor Boucher de Rochechouart, Viscountess de Pontville, Pierre Parmentier, tax collector, and Louis Philippe Mousset, carpenter.

Floréal 5.—When the King of Prussia entered Verdun last year, some of the inhabitants presented him

with the keys of the town; the wives and daughters of the burghers offered him wreaths of flowers; they were present at a ball given in the enemy's honour by the royalist municipality, and the women danced with the Prussian officers. The ringleaders have been tried for this crime by the Revolutionary Tribunal—thirty-four male and female inhabitants have been sentenced to death. The youth of three of the women it was hoped might save their lives, but this attenuation of their crime was only admitted in favour of Claire Tabouillot and Barbe Henry, who were seventeen years of age; their sentence was that they should be shown on the guillotine for six hours. Had to execute the thirty-four culprits to-day, and a terrible day's work it was.

Floréal 6.—This morning at ten o'clock Claire Tabouillot and Barbe Henry were shown on the guillotine on which their mothers and sisters were killed yesterday. They were to remain there six hours, but after an hour Barbe Henry fainted. Claire Tabouillot was so pale that everybody saw she was about to faint also. The mob cried 'Enough!' So Henri, my son, went to the House of Justice to inform Fouquier-Tinville of what was taking place. Naudin, Fouquier's substitute, ordered him to untie the girls and send them to prison, which was done at half-past twelve. At four o'clock we executed Mathieu Schweryer, bootmaker; Jacques Pommerage, hairdresser, sentenced for singing anti-republican songs; François Bonin, printer, who had called Robespierre a conspirator; Jean François Noël, potter; Jeanne Elizabeth Bertault, Nicolas Emmanuel

Lescoffier, Jean Nicolas Lallemand, priest; Jean Claude Jacquot, lawyer, &c., &c.—twelve in all.

. . . . . .

Floréal 9.—To-day Citizen Fouquier behaved like a man. When he was compelled to sell his office as barrister of the Châtelet, the Civil lieutenant, Augrand d'Alleray, was very kind to him. Fouquier remembered it. Augrand d'Alleray had been imprisoned at Port-Libre; he was an inoffensive old man, and there was little chance of his being brought up for judgment. Unfortunately his name was found, by chance, in a list of dangerous prisoners. Fouquier proved that he wished to save him, for he recommended him to the jurors; but Augrand refused to be let off. With him were executed Aymond Charles François de Nicolaï, late president of the Grand Council, and thirty-three other convicts, most of whom were noblemen and magistrates.

Floréal 10.—Gamain, the locksmith, who denounced Louis XVI., has addressed a petition to the Convention, asking for a reward. The Assembly has granted the man's petition.

Floréal 11.—Stanislas de Langanerie, chevalier de St. Louis, convicted of having been one of the Knights of the Dagger, was executed to-day. It is now a long time since we had only one convict to put to death, and the people hardly took the trouble to look on. The Tribunal to-day acquitted fifteen persons. Several among these lucky persons had, according to provincial custom, added the name of Marat to their names. Before discharging them Dumas, who presided, made them a little

speech on the duties imposed by the patronage of the great citizen.

Floréal 12.—We executed seven plebeians and two noblemen.

Floréal 13.—Denys Corbillet, upholsterer, and lieutenant in the National Guard; Pierre Diacon, inspector of arms at the arsenal; and Léonce Pitrat, curate of Livemont, suffered to-day.

Floréal 14.—We led to the Place de la Révolution the officers and grenadiers of the battalion 'des Filles Saint-Thomas,' who alone, on the 10th of August, defended the King. There were twelve of them. Denys Repoux de Chevagny suffered with them.

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Floréal 17.—To-day the Convention issued a decree by which the general farmers are to be tried by the Revolutionary Tribunal. Citizen Dupin, a deputy, has written the report against them. The twenty millions given up by them to the nation cannot save them, I fear. They were speaking at the House of Justice of the trial of Elizabeth, sister of the King, which is soon to take place. Nine executions yesterday; twenty-three to-day.

Floréal 19.—The trial of the general farmers was concluded to-day. Four were acquitted—Sanlot, Delaage the younger, Bellefait, and Delatante: all the others, twenty-eight in number, were condemned to death, and executed at two o'clock this afternoon. One of them, Lavoisier, was a great chemist. He asked for a delay of a fortnight in order to achieve a discovery; but his brief was not acceded to. Most of the convicts seemed

to have no regret. Papillon d'Hauteville said, addressing the mob: 'The only thing which annoys me is that I have such disreputable heirs.'

Floréal 20.—Madame Elizabeth was taken to the Conciergerie this morning. My son saw her; she is, he told me, very wan and pale. She was reading a prayer-book. Fouquier will question her in the course of the night.

Floréal 22.—I was present during part of Madame Elizabeth's trial. Dumas presided; fiften jurors were in the box, and Limdon was prosecutor. An arm-chair was given to the King's sister, a favour which surprised me. A thousand rumours were circulated concerning this sad affair. Some people say that Robespierre visited Madame Elizabeth in prison, and hinted that she could appear on the throne of her ancestors if she would marry him. All this of course is absurd. Others say that he was strongly opposed to the trial. If one may judge by Dumas' polite manners with the princess, there is some likelihood of this being true. Elizabeth answered all questions put to her with much calm and presence of mind. She denied the charges brought against her. It was pretty certain that she would be condemned, and the sentence of death passed by the court surprised no one. As a conspiracy cannot but be concocted by several persons, twenty-three prisoners were convicted with the princess.[1]

I left the Hall of Justice to prepare for the execution.

[1] The names given in the original text of the diary are in the present case, as in many other places, omitted. They do not add to the interest of the executioner's notes, and these nomenclatures are often tedious.—N. ED.

At four o'clock, Desmorets, one of my assistants, brought me the order. I was about to enter Richard's room when I saw a lady, who held up a handkerchief to her eyes. I recognised the princess, and entered. Richard told me that she conversed with his wife, and wanted to know how the Queen died. While Henri and the assistants were 'preparing' the other convicts, Richard at length told Madame Elizabeth that I was waiting. She bade farewell to Richard's wife, and followed him to the special room reserved for women. When I entered she was already seated, with her hair flowing over her shoulders. She was praying with fervour. Her hair was auburn, very long and thick. Just before I took her hands to bind them, she made the sign of the cross. She did not appear to me as thin as Henri told me. Her waist was rather thick, like the King's, and her face very full. The most apparent trace of imprisonment was her extreme pallor. When I returned with her to the other convicts, the latter bowed low to her. She spoke to the Loménies, but I could not catch her words. . . . Madame Elizabeth was in the first cart with the two Loménies, the bishop, and the late minister. The bishop spoke to her of God, and she listened with devotion.

As leader of the conspiracy she was to be executed last; I had received very stringent orders on that point. She remained in the midst of the gendarmes whilst her companions were being guillotined. Two of the convicts, Montmorin and Lhote, cried, '*Vive le Roi!*' which greatly infuriated the mob. The princess heeded not what was

going on around her. When her turn came, she went up the steps, slightly trembling. She was strapped down and guillotined in a moment. Her body was buried at Mousseaux, and a quantity of quicklime was spread over it. Her companions in death were buried in the same cemetery. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood have discovered that bodies, instead of being taken to the cemetery of St. Roch, are now carried to their quarter, and they are much discontented.

CHAPTER XLI.

CHARLES HENRI SANSON'S DIARY—continued.

THE dark sky under which we live is beginning to clear up. On the 18th Robespierre made a speech in which he was really eloquent, probably because he was sincere. After this speech the same deputies who had cheered the abjuration of Gobel, and the scenes which took place in consequence, have declared, in a decree, that the nation recognises the existence of a Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul. Many people joke about the Maker which the law now provides; but all those who suffer are in some degree consoled by that recognition. Eight executions to-day.

Floréal 23.—The hopes I expressed yesterday are not yet to be realised. To-day I was ordered by Citizen Fouquier to provide myself with additional assistants. It is said that the prisoners are conspiring in the different prisons of Paris, and that short work must be made of them. If they do conspire, there is nothing astonishing. I see constantly what takes place in the Conciergerie, and I can pretty well guess what occurs elsewhere. In every prison there are agents whose sole mission it is to

make the prisoners talk. They tell them that they can perhaps obtain their liberty; and then, when the unsuspecting prisoners answer, the spy denounces them. I have engaged sixteen new assistants. They are organising the service of the guillotine as if it were to last for ever. Some of my assistants must now remain in permanency at the Conciergerie. The clerks of the court will now go to the Place de la Révolution in turns. Eight executions to-day.

Floréal 24.—Executed Étienne Mauger, monk of the Abbey of Caen; Félix Gardé and François Peton, postmen; George Souen, soldier; Jacques Rollet d'Avaux, nobleman; Jean-Baptiste Ubeleski, &c.—nine in all.

Floréal 25.—Executed Charles Auguste Prévost d'Arlincour, general farmer, father of the D'Arlincour who was guillotined on the 19th. He was seventy-six years old. The *sans-culottes* are more infuriated against those who are said to have sophisticated their tobacco than if they had turned their bread into stone. They had no pity for the old man. Besides, it would be imprudent for any one to show any sympathy for any prisoner. The number of spies who usually escort us has been doubled since the inhabitants of the Rue St. Honoré have taken to closing their doors and windows whenever a *cortége* passes. Seven men and a woman suffered with D'Arlincour.

Floréal 26.—Pierre Alexandre Joseph Chiavary, captain in the army; Antoine Baptiste Tassin, lawyer; Ernest Meynier, late deputy; André Fissard, solicitor; Henri Henry, clerk of the Tribunal of Newarden; Marc

Blass, grocer, all convicted of conspiracy against the sovereignty of the people; and Frédéric Bernard, draper at Sens, were executed to-day.

Floréal 29.—The son of Bonarée-Corberon, ex-president, executed on the 1st of this month, was guillotined to-day, and with him twelve other convicts. This morning I received the visit of a maniac, who asked me to look at a projected guillotine with three knives, which he had invented. He really amused me. His pride and his hatred against aristocrats were really very comical. His discovery, he said, would consolidate the Republic. He left me, and went to Fouquier-Tinville.

Prairial 3.—Leflot, a manager of the customs, was beheaded to-day. In Nivôse last, the wife of a royalist was wandering with her baby in the neighbourhood of Trégnier, suffering from cold and hunger, and risking starvation every day. No one cared to give her shelter, or even a mouthful of bread. A brave exciseman did what others were afraid to do: he concealed the woman and her child in the hollow of a rock, and gave them clothes, straw, and food. Good sentiments are as contagious as bad ones. The other excisemen remarked the frequent disappearances of their comrade, and soon found out his secret. They resolved to help the poor woman, in spite of the laws and decrees which ordered them to be relentless against royalists; and one night she was sent on board an English ship off the coast. Unfortunately they did not hold their tongues, and their act of charity became known at large. The captain wished to know who were the culprits, but none

would reveal the secret; and when Leflot threatened to pick out a number of his men at random and shoot them, they only laughed, and answered that he was too good a fellow to suit the action to the word. Captain Leflot was, as they said, a good and brave man; and he left the offence unpunished, hoping that it would be overlooked by the authorities. His generosity forfeited his life. Two persons were executed with him.

Prairial 5.—The despotism of the Committee has just been consecrated by murder. Two days ago a man tried to murder Collot d'Herbois; yesterday a girl tried to stab Robespierre. Collot's assailant was a native of Auvergne, named Ladmiral. He lived in the same house as Collot (42 Rue Favart). It is said that he intended to kill either Robespierre or Collot—perhaps both, if he could. He went to the Convention, intending to strike the two deputies there; but Robespierre and Collot were absent, so he returned home, and waited for the latter. Collot returned at one o'clock a.m.; Ladmiral, who lived on the fifth landing, was at the bottom of the staircase. He saw Collot's servant preparing to light her master up, and fired four pistols at him without effect. Collot, who is brave, made for the murderer, pursued him up the stairs, and tried to break his door open; but a patrol came up, and Collot was prevented with difficulty from entering first and arresting Ladmiral with his own hands. Citizen Geffroy, who seized the murderer, was wounded by him. The attempt on Robespierre's life was less serious. The girl who intended to kill him was so earnest in her entreaties to be shown into his presence

that she was arrested. She was searched, and in her pockets were found two pistols and a dagger. These two crimes to some extent confirm the rumours that there is an extensive conspiracy to murder the principal members of the Convention. To-day we executed Jean-Baptiste Durand, public functionary; François Paulin, teacher; Jean Antoine Pascal, lieutenant of gendarmes; Théodore d'Aumongeville, lieutenant in the army; Simon Tisserand, footman of the late Duke du Châtelet; Jean-Baptiste Gautier, &c.

Prairial 6 and 7.—The name of the girl who intended to murder Robespierre is Cécile Renaud. She is only twenty years of age. The Convention has issued a bulletin concerning the health of Citizen Geffroy, who was wounded in the Collot affair. The martyrdom to which Robespierre and Collot were exposed excites the envy of many of their colleagues. Vouland, among others, alleges that a woman tried to murder him. This woman is to appear to-day before the Tribunal. There is, however, every reason to believe that she never contemplated the act in question. Patriots attribute to the English the attempts against Robespierre and Collot. They charge them with inciting to the destruction of the members of the Convention. The Convention has just passed a decree which enacts that no English and Hanoverian soldiers shall be made prisoners. What will the French soldiers do?

Prairial 8.—The motions of the Jacobins and the Convention have an effect on the decisions of the Tribunal. To-day out of twenty-six prisoners only two

were acquitted, and we guillotined the others. Among these was one who richly deserved death. Jourdan, surnamed Coupe-tête by the inhabitants of Avignon, had committed the most horrible crimes. He acted as Schneider did, and excited the utmost terror in and around Avignon. He showed more bravery on the scaffold than Schneider. Twenty-three were guillotined after him.

Prairial 9.—The daggers of Citizeness Cécile Renaud are now reduced to two small knives, with which she could have hurt no one except herself. However, as she said that she wanted to see a tyrant, there is little hope of saving her. A great many arrests have been made. The Conciergerie received over fifty inmates to-day. Executed fourteen peasants.

Prairial 11.—Twelve executions to-day. I am told that a few days ago, Dumas, Fouquier, Brochet, Renaudin, and others were dining at Méot's, and that, being elated with wine, they called Méot up, and told him that he was about to be arrested and tried by the Tribunal. Poor Méot went down half dead with terror. Fortunately Barrère, who sometimes dines at Méot's, came in. The affrighted restaurateur threw himself at his feet, and implored his protection. As people were looking on, Barrère told Méot that the men upstairs were only joking, as indeed they were; but in the evening Dumas and Fouquier were summoned by the Committee of Public Safety, and severely reprimanded.

Prairial 12.—Thirteen convicts to-day.

Prairial 13.—Same number as yesterday.

Prairial 14.—Agents of the Committee of Public Safety now mingle with those who follow our carts to the scaffold. Every day they draw up a report of what has taken place around the guillotine. If their accounts are truthful, those who send them must not be satisfied. The people are getting more and more disgusted with this eternal butchery. Yesterday I heard cries of 'Enough!' and to-day for the first time there was one solitary hiss. Great preparations are taking place for the Festival of the Supreme Being on the 20th; the ceremony will take place in the National Garden, and as the *cortége* is to pass through the Place de la Révolution, I have received orders to remove the guillotine on the 19th.

Prairial 16.—The aspect of the Conciergerie has much altered of late. When the Revolutionary Tribunal began to sit, it had the appearance of a camp: the prisoners were animated; they walked about, laughed, sang, and talked; the greater number cared little for life. When, on returning from the guillotine, I used to tell one of the turnkeys what had taken place, and when he transmitted the news to them, I could hear them cheering those who had died pluckily, and drinking in honour of those of their companions who were set free. But since Danton's execution, the Conciergerie looked what it used to be before the Revolution—the darkest and gloomiest of prisons. The fever is passed, and now the prisoners are mournful. Rivière showed me a man named Rougane, whose four brothers were guillotined, and who is to be tried to-morrow—and be guillotined also, no doubt. This morning I executed the Marquis

de Biéville and his son, and fifteen other convicts. Among them were a mother, Madame de Goursac, and her son; the former was over eighty years old.

Prairial 17.—Citizen Robespierre was for the second time elected president of the Convention. Nevertheless, it appears that Billaud-Varennes, Ballot, Vadier, and others are secretly plotting to overthrow him. Barrère, who hesitates between the two parties, has given some consistency to these rumours, by saying in a report that the foreigner speaks of us and of our soldiers as *the people of Robespierre, Robespierre's soldiers, Robespierre's government*, &c. Robespierre is very indignant. Those who hope for some return to clemency affirm that he will break with the Terrorists, and play the part he would not allow Danton to assume. They say that he will pronounce the word 'clemency' in his speech to the people on the day of the Festival of the Supreme Being. Coming from him this word would be law; he is all-powerful. The seventy-three deputies incarcerated on May 21 live by him; his moderation towards them ensures him a compact majority in what is called the *Plain* of the Convention. He is master of the Commune, of the Tribunal, and of the Jacobins. He can be merciful if such is his will.

Prairial 18.—Days follow each other and are alike. Twenty-one more convicts to-day. There are some people who say that one gets used to blood; this is not true, when this blood is human blood. I do not speak of myself, but of my assistants, whom I observe. Two of them have been with me for the last

twelve years, four others were butchers' boys; there are at least two who are not worth a rope to hang them with, and yet there is not one who is not moved after a wholesale execution. The public perceives nothing, but often I see their legs tremble. When everything is finished, and they only see corpses around them on the scaffold, they look astonished and uneasy. If such is their impression what must be that of the people? Lavalette, formerly count and officer in the Guards, was executed to-day. He was imprisoned at La Bourbe with his wife, and was playing at battledore and shuttlecock with her in the courtyard when a turnkey came up and ordered Lavalette to follow him. 'What for?' asked Lavalette. 'To go to the Tribunal, and from thence to the guillotine!' answered the brute. The shock was so sudden that Madame de Lavalette lost her senses. With Lavalette were executed Joseph Aboulin, lieutenant in the dragoons; Joseph Tournier, priest; Theodore Delany and Patrick Roden, Irishmen, deserters; Jean Foiret, public scribe; Étienne Félix de Forceville, nobleman; William Newton, Englishman, colonel in the armies of the Republic; Mercien d'Aubeville, nobleman, and judge at Pithiviers; Antoinette Jacquemot, laundress; Dolphine Elizabeth Marchais; Emma Marguerite Guillier, &c.—twenty in all.

CHAPTER XLII.

CHARLES HENRI SANSON'S DIARY—continued.

Prairial 21.—The festival of the Supreme Being took place yesterday. Flowers were brought from miles around in honour of the Divinity; but the pontiff did not pronounce the words of clemency which were expected. We removed the scaffold, and this gave some credence to rumours of amnesty. The hideous cesspool of blood which lies under the scaffold was covered with long and strong planks. Brilliant as the proceedings were, the day was not exactly a success. They say that it was the festival of discord, not of the Supreme Being. If Robespierre did not claim the finest privilege of royalty, clemency, he at least appropriated its haughty formalities. He is accused of having made the Convention wait for him, with having preceded the representatives, as if to show that they were only a gang of inferiors; even the elegance of his dress and the proportions of the banquet which he held are criticised, and for some irrepressible republicans these are unmistakable tokens of his royalist leanings.

Prairial 22.—To-day the Tribunal began the trial of the suspected people sent from the departments by the

representatives in mission. Thirteen inhabitants of the town of Corne appeared this morning. Ten were condemned, as were also three other prisoners. Executed the whole of them.

Prairial 25.—At last the brief of the inhabitants of the Rue St. Honoré has been granted. The day before yesterday, as I was going to bed, I was called to the House of Justice, where Royer, the substitute, ordered me to clear the Place de la Révolution of the scaffold, and to take it to the Place de la Bastille. The carpenters worked all night. The public of this new quarter has no liking for executions, for as soon as we appeared in the Rue St. Antoine with three carts full, we were hissed and otherwise ill received. The inhabitants of the Quartier St. Antoine are not so timid as those of the Place de la Révolution, and they made no secret of their disgust; when the execution took place almost everybody had gone away. The Committee have determined not to renew the experiment, and under pretence that the Place de la Bastille is too good a place for aristocratic blood, they have directed the scaffold to be transferred to the Place du Trône. So we passed another sleepless night. We are now to send the corpses to the St. Marguerite Cemetery.

Prairial 26.—The Revolutionary Tribunal has no shame. Last month it acquitted Fréteau, councillor of the parliament of Paris. This indulgence proved disagreeable to Fouquier-Tinville, but he soon found means to correct what in his conviction could only be the result of a mistake. He declared that the affair was

not legal, and made an order for a new trial. As a matter of course, Fréteau could not escape death, for Fouquier's hint to the jury was pretty plain, and he was executed to-day, together with thirty-five other convicts; twenty-six of the number were councillors of the parliament of Toulouse.

Prairial 27.—To-day I had trustworthy information concerning the body-guards, without which, it is said, Citizen Robespierre never goes out. I met him in a very out-of-the-way place, and his satellites consisted of a white-and-black dog. Martin, my assistant, proposed to me to see to this day's work; I accepted, for it was a long time since I promised to take my nieces to the country, and I was glad to get out of sight of the guillotine. We went through Clichy and got into the fields. The little girls romped in the fields, and I ran about with them; but my old legs soon had enough of this, and I sat down on the side of the road. Presently I saw a citizen, with a dog, who was coming up. The citizen looked at the children, who were trying to reach some wild roses in a hedge, and obligingly came to their help. He picked the flowers, and divided them between the two little girls. I saw the little ones kiss the citizen. They came up to me talking and smiling. It was then that I recognised the stranger. He wore a dark blue coat, yellow breeches, and a white waistcoat. His hair was powdered and carefully combed, and he held his hat in his hand. His gait was stiff, his head was slightly thrown backwards, and his face wore a look of gaiety which surprised me. Citizen Robespierre asked me if

the children were mine. I replied that they were my nieces; he congratulated me on their beauty. Mary made a small nosegay and offered it to him; he took it and stuck it in his buttonhole. He then asked her name, so, he said, as to remember her when the flowers should fade. The poor child not only gave her Christian, but added the other, whereupon Robespierre's face instantly changed. He said to me in a dry and haughty voice. 'You are——?' I bowed. For a few seconds he was thoughtful; he was evidently struggling against a repulsion which he could not master. At length he bent down, kissed the children very tenderly, called his dog, and went away without looking at me.

Prairial 28.—At present the prisons contain 7,321 prisoners, but the gaols are being rapidly emptied. They have begun with Bicêtre, thirty-seven inmates of which were executed to-day; others are waiting for trial. This selection of common criminals was premeditated; it is hoped thus to extinguish all interest on behalf of the political victims that are to follow on the guillotine. The rumour is again spread that there is agitation among prisoners. We know what that means. Howbeit this is what took place at Bicêtre: Two locksmiths named Lucas and Ballin—both convicted for theft—had planned an escape; they received from without a file with which they cut the iron bars of a window. But they were imprudent enough to say to their companions that they should be free on the morrow, and to propose to a man of the name of Voulagnos to escape with them. Voulagnos was a spy; he reported the pro-

jected escape, and the whole affair was discovered. This gave rise to the ingenious idea of inventing a plot among the prisoners of Bicêtre, whereof the object was to escape in order to murder the members of the Convention. All the prisoners designated by the spy Voulagnos were tried and executed.

Prairial 29.—A terrible day's work! The guillotine devoured fifty-four victims. My strength is at an end, and I almost fainted away. A caricature has been shown to me in which I am represented guillotining myself in the middle of a heath covered with headless bodies and bodiless heads. I do not boast of extraordinary squeamishness; I have seen too much blood in my life not to be callous. If what I feel is not pity, it must be a derangement of my nerves. Perhaps I am punished by the Almighty for my cowardly obedience to mock justice. For some time I have been troubled with terrible visions. I am taken with fever as soon as I enter the Conciergerie; it is like fire flowing under my skin. Abstemious as I am, it seems to me as if I were intoxicated—the people who are around me, the furniture, the walls, dance and whirl around me, and my ears are full of strange noises. I struggle against this feeling, but in vain. My hands tremble, and tremble so that I have been compelled to give up cutting the hair of the doomed prisoners. They are before me weeping and praying, and I cannot convince myself of the reality of what is going on. I lead them to death, and I cannot believe that they are going to die. It is like a dream which I strive to dispel. I follow the prepara-

tions for the tragedy, and I have no idea what is to occur next, and I discharge my functions with the mechanical regularity of an automaton. Then comes the thump of the knife which reminds me of the horrible reality. I cannot hear it now without a shudder. A kind of rage then takes possession of me. Forgetting that I ought to blame myself more than others, I abuse the gendarmes who, sabre in hand, have escorted the victims; I abuse the people who look on without raising a finger in their defence; I abuse the sun which lightens all this. At length I leave the scaffold, disposed to weep, although I cannot find a tear. Never were these sensations more violent than to-day. Ladmiral and Cécile Renaud were among the convicts of to-day, and the others were their so-called accomplices.

Since the 23rd the Committee of Public Safety sends lists of death to the Tribunal. The arrest of Naudin and Antonnelle, two jurors who would not admit that revolutionary right was above right of justice, shows that this Tribunal is no more than a sham. While he preaches against indulgence at the Jacobins, Robespierre nevertheless abstains from being present when these lists are being drawn up—that is to say, that he shirks the odium, so as to be able to show that he is guiltless of bloodshed. The other members of the Committee are aware of his tactics, and they gave as much importance as they could to the trial of the 'murderers of Robespierre,' thereby trying to sap his reputation by calling attention to his omnipotency.

In this affair they introduced two women, the St.

Amaranthes, who were acquainted with Robespierre the younger; and they spread the rumour that one of these women was Maximilian Robespierre's mistress, and that Maximilian insisted on her death because she surprised the secret of his aspirations to royalty.

All this was being whispered around the scaffold; but it was not this wily combination of the Committee which produced the deepest impression. Citizeness St. Amaranthe held at No. 50 of the Palais Égalité a gaming house, frequented by many influential men, and an equal number of adventurers—Danton, Hérault de Séchelles, Lacroix, Robespierre the younger, Desfieux, Proly, and the famous Baron de Batz, whom the police could never lay hands upon. Madame St. Amaranthe's daughter was young and pretty. When mother and daughter were arrested, their servants and friends were also taken. Maria Grandmaison, an actress of the Italian Theatre, and Marie Nicole Bouchard, her servant, were of the number. The latter was only eighteen years old, and she was so thin and delicate that she did not appear more than fourteen. When the poor little girl held out her hands to Larivière, he turned to Desmorets, my head assistant, and said: 'Surely this is a joke?' Desmorets shrugged his shoulders, and it was the little one who, smiling through her tears, answered: 'No, sir, it is serious;' whereupon Larivière threw down his cords, and exclaimed: 'Let some one else bind her. It is not my profession to execute children!' She was calm and resigned. There was a delay in starting. Red shirts had been ordered only for Ladmiral, Sainte-

nax, and the four Renauds.[1] An order came at the last moment directing all the culprits to be arrayed in the same garment. While the shirts were being fetched, little Nicole Bouchard sat down at her mistress's feet, and tried to console her. She asked leave to be with her in the same cart. I really believed that if she had begged for life, more than one would have freed her, and offered to take her place. What we felt the people felt also. The crowd was very large, owing to the proportions of the execution. The hundreds of gendarmes who escorted us, and the cannon which followed in the rear, had induced all Parisians to come out. Five or six young and pretty women were in the first cart, and their fate excited pity; but when poor little Nicole Bouchard was seen there was an explosion of indignation. Cries of 'No children!' rose numerous and loud. In the Faubourg St. Antoine I could see the women weeping. I was almost overpowered by this scene. I had looked at Nicole Bouchard at the Conciergerie, and her eyes, to my thinking, seemed to say: 'You will not kill me!' And yet she is dead now. She was the ninth. When she passed before me, I had to struggle with an inspiration, which whispered in my ear: 'Smash up the guillotine, and do not allow this child to die!'

My assistants pushed her on towards the knife. I turned away; my legs trembled, and I turned sick. It was Martin who had charge of the execution. He said to me:

[1] The red shirt was the garment of parricides.

'You are unwell. Go home, and trust to me for the rest.'

I did not answer, and left the scaffold. I was in a fever, and so scared that at the corner of the Rue Saint-onge, when a woman stopped me and begged, I thought the little girl was before me. This evening I thought I saw spots of blood on the tablecloth as I was sitting down to dinner.

Prairial 30.—No executions to-day. Remained at home, and read the papers. Robespierre's enemies have found another weapon to strike him with. There are some distracted women who recite prayers in his honour. If they could only persuade the masses that he suffers and encourages this, it would be all over with him; and that is just what Vadier tried to do in the sitting of the 27th. A police officer employed by the Committee has found out an old woman who pretends to be a prophetess, and who announces the advent of a new saviour. This saviour is Robespierre. Vadier made the most of this discovery.

Messidor 1.—From the 1st to the 4th of Messidor ninety-two convicts have been put to death.

The dead are beginning to frighten the living. The inhabitants of the Montreuil section, where we now send the dead bodies, have complained. They urged that the stench is horrible, and that, unless the small cemetery of St. Marguerite be closed, serious consequences cannot but ensue. After much hesitation the Commune has selected a new place for the burial of the exe-

cuted. This is the garden of the old convent of Picpus. The spot seems to be ill chosen; the soil is composed of pure clay, and it cannot absorb what is deposited in it. But, thank Heaven! this is no business of mine. My task ends on the scaffold. The Commune pays for 'crows' (undertakers), who receive the bodies from my assistants and bury them. Desmorets, my head assistant, goes with them. Whatever is found in the pockets of the convicts is taken to the Commune; the clothes, &c., are sent to the charities. To-day the Tribunal condemned a man under rather curious circumstances. His name was Doyen, and he was a wood merchant. He was wealthy and parsimonious. His fortune was much envied by his neighbours, and he was so afraid of getting into trouble that for a whole year he did not speak. He lived alone, and communicated by signs with those he had to deal with. When he was asked the time, he took out his watch and showed it to you without a word. This singular reserve was taken for pride, and his enemies became legion. One night the Tree of Liberty, planted in the public square of the town in which he lived, was uprooted, and, as a matter of course, the crime was attributed to Citizen Doyen. His house was searched. While the soldiers were searching the first floor, a gendarme was about to take up a log of wood and throw it into the grate, when Doyen rushed forward, exclaiming: 'Not this one!' This excited suspicion. An axe was procured, and, when the log was split, a number of golden louis dropped on the floor. This circumstance settled his fate. He recovered his

powers of speech before the Tribunal, but too late to save his life.

Messidor 6.—Fear of the guillotine has induced a prisoner of Les Madelonnettes to hang himself. Before tying the noose he wrote in the following terms to Robespierre: 'Virtuous Robespierre, provide for my wife, for now she has no means of livelihood.' This is the second prisoner who has commited suicide. The late *valet-de-chambre* of the Duke de Créqy, one Cuni, cut his throat with a razor a few days ago. Executed twenty-three men and four women. One of the men, a deserter of the name of Notter, had a dog. The animal was much attached to its master, and it was the cause of his arrest. The dog followed him to prison, and remained at the door until the carts came out of the yard. It recognised its master, and, barking with joy, followed us to the Place du Trône. When the soldier alighted he patted the poor beast and asked several persons to take and keep it; but no one dared. When the time for separation came, the dog would not leave its master, and followed him up to the platform. One of my men threw it down; but the dog rushed up the steps again, and began to howl dismally; whereupon a gendarme pinned it with his bayonet. Strange to say, the people, who can stand and see Christians murdered, took the dog's part. Stones were aimed at the gendarme, and he narrowly escaped with his life. A workman took up the dog, and carried it away.

Messidor 7.—There was a time when the women were, as a rule, stronger and pluckier than the men.

Not so now. They weep, tremble, and beg for mercy. We have had a fearful day. The Faubourg St. Antoine cannot forget it. My carts contained twenty-three women of different ages and social standing. Each turn of the wheel was marked by a sob. Their shrieks were awful to hear. The crowd dispersed, and we made our way along deserted streets. My men were more than usually dark and sullen. One of them said: 'They compel us to disgrace the guillotine.' I was not left to suffer alone to-day.

Messidor 8.—The other prisoners of Bicêtre, who were compromised by Valagnos' denunciation, were guillotined to-day. Among these was Osselin, a deputy of the National Assembly. He had given shelter to one Madame Charry, an *émigrée*, in a country house situated at Marly. This generous deed at first cost him his liberty, and afterwards his life. He confided in a ruffian whom he believed to be his friend. The man saw Madame Charry, fell in love with her, and threatened her with immediate arrest if she did not return his affection. As a matter of course, Madame Charry refused; and on the following day she was arrested, tried, and executed.

As the law which punishes with death whoever shall shelter an enemy of the Republic was not yet passed, Osselin was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and sent to Bicêtre, where he was fain to mingle with criminals of the worst class. His former position, and, above all, his connection with Danton's party, pointed him out to those who had the mission to clear the prisons, and he was arraigned. Osselin, it appears, resolved not to

appear on the guillotine. He found a large nail in the ceiling of his cell, and struck himself three times with it; but he survived his wounds. When we came to fetch Osselin the doctor of the Conciergerie humourously observed that it was useless to take him to the scaffold, as he had but a few moments to live. Nevertheless we carried him away. Poor Osselin called for death, and tore away his bandages. The doctor, who accompanied us, told him that he need have no fear, that the guillotine was a long way off, and that he might possibly die on the way; and, in fact, when we reached the Place du Trône, Osselin was pale and stiff, and to all appearance dead. I felt so sure of it that I told Desmorets to throw a blanket over the corpse, and leave it in the cart; but the doctor, who was still with us, said that Osselin was still alive, and that the sentence should therefore be carried out. As I was hesitating, he said to me: 'Fool, if he is dead, of what consequence is it whether he reaches the other world with or without his head? Think of what might happen to us if he were still alive!' Osselin was carried to the weigh-plank, but not a muscle moved when the knife came down; and I am firmly persuaded that we guillotined a corpse.

My grandfather's diary here comes to an end. He gives no warning of his intention to discontinue this daily record of his bloody mission, but I think I can explain this sudden conclusion. He was a strong and callous man; but few, even among the hardest, could

have resisted the work which the Revolutionary Tribunal provided for him. His constitution gave way, and his spirits also. He had a violent attack of *delirium tremens* after the execution of Robespierre's so-called murderers. Martin, his brother, who usually took his place whenever there was occasion for doing so, perceived that the old executioner was breaking down. He was pale, agitated, and uneasy. The slightest noise made him shudder, and he avoided his relatives. He no longer related to his wife and children the scenes in which he acted the chief part; and his usual state of mind was a dark moodiness, which he retained to his last day. This easily explains the interruption of his diary. The reader may have noticed that his last notes are far less precise and minute than the first portion of his information; in the last days of Prairial he seldom mentions the names of victims.

True it is that, at the time, the guillotine was *commercially* organised, and when its chief functionary did not score down the names of the guillotined, one of his assistants acted as his book-keeper. Desmorets, whose name Charles Henri Sanson frequently mentions, and whose grandson is now executioner at Bordeaux, joined the duties of clerk to that of chief assistant. I have in my hands a complete list, drawn up by him, of *all* the persons guillotined during the Revolution; and as the number of the victims has been unduly exaggerated, I have, for the behoof of my readers, made a *résumé* of the executions that took place in Paris during the revolutionary period. This *résumé* is affixed here-

TABLE SUMMARISING THE EXECUTIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE IN PARIS DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD, JULY 14, 1789, TO OCTOBER 21, 1796.

Age of the Executed	Number	Age of the Executed	Number
Under 18 years of age	22	From 70 to 80 years	103
From 18 to 20 years	45	Above 80 years	9
From 20 ,, 25 ,,	336		
From 25 ,, 50 ,,	1,669	Men	2,548
From 50 ,, 60 ,,	528	Women	370
From 60 ,, 70 ,,	206		

Profession and Social Position of the Executed	Number	Profession and Social Position of the Executed	Number
Members of the Church, Bishops and Archbishops	6	Gentlefolks of both sexes without profession	381
Marshals of France and Lieutenant-Generals	25	Officers and soldiers	365
Magistrates, members of the ancient Parliaments	246	Writers and journalists of both sexes	275
Ecclesiastics, priests, monks, &c.	319	Artists	16
Members of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies	39	Tradesmen of both sexes	275
Members of the Convention	45	Artisans	391
Members of the Commune	73	Servants of both sexes	129
Liberal professions, financiers, barristers, doctors, lawyers, functionaries	479	Labourers and peasants	105

Total for both sexes : 2918.

CHAPTER XLIII.

MY FATHER GOES INTO THE ARTILLERY.—HIS MS.

I MUST now beg leave to return for a time to our family affairs. My father left me a MS. account of his services in the artillery, which I will presently give, as a curious illustration of the importance the revolutionists proposed to give to the functions of executioner. This account contains some interesting observations on the change of opinions which had taken place in favour of the executioner. The Republic treated us better than the Monarchy: it had too often recourse to our services not to reward us for the trouble. We were no longer shunned and despised; representatives of the people, club orators, celebrated *sans-culottes* fraternised with the executioner. At one time there was a question of devising a glorious name worthy of the grandeur of our mission. It was very seriously proposed to call the executioner the 'Avenger of the People,' to dress him in an imposing costume whereby all could identify him as one of the most important functionaries of the nation. David, the great painter, called on my grandfather and showed him a drawing of a costume he had specially

devised for him. Charles Henri declined the honour, and expressed a wish to dress just as other people did.

But this was but one of the slightest favours bestowed on my grandfather; the people often cheered him on his way to the scaffold, and many ran up to him after executions offering to drink with him, and so forth.

I now leave the pen to my father, whose account requires no further introduction:

'It was on a Sunday of the month of October 1793, the call was being beaten, and citizens of our quarter were hurrying to the usual place of meeting, the St. Laurent Church. I went there myself. After the sitting, as I was conversing with some friends, I was accosted by a numerous party, composed of working men. One of the men addressed me in the following terms:

'"Citizen Henri Sanson, we are the first party of the men who are to form the new company of gunners of this section. We are about to elect our officers, and as we know you to be a good patriot, we shall be much flattered if you will join us."

'This request surprised me very much. At first I was strongly tempted to refuse; but I did not care to give offence to my would-be friends, and I may as well confess that I was gratified at their politeness. I made a few objections, but they were soon overruled, and I yielded with a good grace.

'My new companions forthwith took me to the hall where the election of officers was to take place. One can imagine my surprise when, on my arrival, I found

myself elected by acclamation president of the electoral assembly before I knew precisely what I was about. The vote for the rank of captain began, and my surprise exceeded all bounds when I perceived that everybody voted for me. I was both flattered and moved, but, conscious as I was of my inability to discharge functions of which I had not the slightest notion, I attempted to decline the honour. My modesty, however, was of no avail, and I was elected. My uncle, who was present, was made a sub-lieutenant, and one of my intimate friends was appointed sergeant. My friend, whose name was Masson, was beside himself with joy. He was witty, sensible, and well-educated. We were of the same age, and soon became very intimate; he came to dine at my father's every Sunday—the only day on which my father could receive the few friends it is possible to have in our profession. It was after one of these dinners that the adventure I have just related happened to us.

'Masson was not of our section; he lived in the Île Saint-Louis, and he was in fear that this circumstance might prevent him from accepting his promotion. But he was soon reassured.

'As for me, I went to a sergeant of my company who had been a gunner and had some good notions of artillery; the good man gave me lessons, and what he knew he very soon imparted to me. But it was all very well to know how to obey; the question was, how could I learn how to command? But where there's a will there's a way. I took lessons from other friends of mine,

and at last I was enabled to undertake my command without exposing myself too much to sarcasm. Moreover the Government took good care to perfect our military education, and when we were sufficiently proficient, our four companies—those of the North, Bondy, Bonne-Nouvelle, and Mauconseil—were assembled on the Boulevard Bondy, where they manœuvred twice a week. Meanwhile, by means of a few good breakfasts, I persuaded our instructor to give me private lessons.

'The Government proposed to make serious use of us. While our organisation was being provided for, a pay was awarded to the men. It was thus graduated:

30 sols for privates,
45 sols for corporals,
3 livres 15 sols for sergeants,
4 livres 10 sols for the sub-lieutenant,
6 livres for the lieutenant,
7 livres 10 sols for the captain.

'As may be seen, I was better off than the others.

'This state of things lasted three months, at the end of which we were definitely organised after the model of the dismounted gendarmes. Our companies were composed of fifty-one men fully equipped.

'We did not wait long for active service, and while some companies were being sent to La Vendée, and others to Lyons, mine was sent, together with another company styled "Des Droits de l'Homme," into La Brie, where an insurrection had just occurred.

'The alarm was unfounded; for if the movement was spontaneous, it was quelled with the same rapidity.

It was said that 20,000 inhabitants of La Brie and of the neighbourhood of Coulommiers had taken to arms at the bidding of the priests and other ecclesiastics, supported by the most influential persons of the locality. When we arrived all was finished, and the garrison of Coulommiers, that is to say, a company of the 16th cavalry regiment, sufficed to quell the great sedition. The effective force of this company was only of eighty-four men; but what was more curious, the captain and the two lieutenants were away at the time of the rising, and it was the sub-lieutenant, a boy of fifteen, who advanced at the head of his small company and charged the seditious gathering. This boldness was crowned with success. The affair took place between Maupertuis and Coulommiers, and as soon as the peasants found themselves charged by this feeble detachment of cavalry, they dispersed and took to flight after firing a few shots which wounded no one. The chasseurs then surrounded the remaining insurgents and led them back to Coulommiers, where they shut them up in a church, the prison being too small to contain them.

'When we arrived we were arrayed in order of battle on the public place. We loaded our pieces with grape-shot and threatened to discharge them into the church if any symptom of rebellion was shown by the prisoners.

'This resolute attitude intimidated the multitude, and extinguished all further thought of insurrection. We had with us 500 men of infantry and a squadron of cavalry, which, with ourselves and the garrison of Cou-

lommiers, made up an effective force of 800 or 900 men. This force was more than enough to put down more important seditions. The youthful lieutenant who had so bravely taken the initiative of repression was much congratulated. When excitement had subsided, it was perceived that we were far too numerous for the small town of Coulommiers; so our troops were sent in detachments to neighbouring villages. One detachment went to Le Ferté-Gaucher, another to the Abbey of Farmontière, and a third to Rozay-en-Brie. I remained in Coulommiers with my company and the remainder of the troops. We formed a staff, composed of at least thirty officers; we took our meals together, and the greatest harmony prevailed amongst us. I little thought that circumstances would eventually alter all this, and exclude us from social intercourse.

'I discharged my functions with great zeal, maintaining stringent discipline, often drilling my company, and taking much pleasure in military life. We had no further trouble with the inhabitants of Coulommiers. The majority in the town was for us: it was only in the country that we were looked upon with hostility; but even this rural dislike soon disappeared. During the six months we remained at Coulommiers we had none of those grave conflicts with the civil authorities which elsewhere occurred between the military and civil powers. Nevertheless, the Revolutionary Tribunal of our town was strangely composed. Its president was a little hunchback, who was thoroughly imbued with the idea of his own importance. This ridiculous individual could

neither read nor write; but this did not stop him from ordering that all letters sent and received by the post-office should be forwarded to him for scrutiny.

'I was then in frequent correspondence with my family and a few friends in Paris, so that I was one of the first victims of this little caricature of a tyrant. A letter sent to me was handed over to him. He had the insolence to open it; but what will scarcely be believed is that the hunchback and his clerks could not read it, and actually had the impudence to send for me to know what it contained. I confess that I could hardly master my indignation; and, instead of giving them the explanation they asked for, I told them in unmeasured terms what I thought of their conduct. I threatened to write to the Paris authorities on the matter, and had the satisfaction to intimidate them sufficiently to make them give up my letter. The hunchback, moreover, asked me to overlook the matter, and apologised, saying that it was a mistake.

'I was glad that the affair went no further, for the letter was from my poor mother, and contained on the victims of the time expressions which might have appeared treasonable to the ludicrous president of the Tribunal.

'I again had difficulties with the Tribunal. This time it was concerning two men of my company, who had infringed one of the laws, in the making of which the local revolutionists were so prodigal. We were then under the empire of the law of *maximum*, of which the effects

were so deplorable. The farmers who would not sbumit to the *maximum* no longer brought their provisions to the market, and we were often obliged to go and fetch provisions in the country. Now the little hunchback and his colleagues hit upon an ingenious device. They forbade any one to go and procure provisions beyond the walls of the town.

'As they had no means of enforcing this absurd measure, they determined to do the work themselves. They repaired to the gates of the town, and became amateur excisemen. The hunchback and his colleagues were unfortunate, for the very first misdemeanants they pounced upon were two sappers of my company, who were tall and strong, and anything but disposed to allow themselves to be searched. A dispute followed, and this degenerated into a free fight, in which the civil power was much maltreated. The respectable president of the Revolutionary Tribunal received more kicks below his hump than was precisely agreeable, and his worthy companions fared no better.

'I was immediately summoned to appear before these terrible myrmidons of the law. Although I was not personally concerned in this affair, I had more trouble to settle it than the first one. Still I accomplished this delicate task. The little hunchback was furious, and wanted to arrest my two sappers and try them. With much difficulty I made him understand that he had no legal control over them : that it would be imprudent to give publicity to an affair which might

make people laugh at his expense. This last reason effectually convinced him, and he reluctantly gave up his hopes of redress.

'My stay at Coulommiers, which lasted about six months, was otherwise a quiet and pleasant one. I then received orders to go to Rozay-en-Brie, as temporary commander, with twenty-five artillerymen and thirty soldiers, commanded by a lieutenant, under my orders. I stayed there three weeks, up to the time when I was replaced by the "Contrat Social" company. I then returned to Paris, where I was to be mixed up with an affair which made me bitterly regret having accepted my rank.'

CHAPTER XLIV.

ARREST OF MY FATHER AND GREAT-UNCLE AFTER THE 9th OF THERMIDOR.

THE affair to which my father alludes in the last lines of his MS. was of a very grave kind, and nearly cost him his life. Some years elapsed before he wrote the following account of it:—

'After my expedition in Brie, I returned to Paris, where I had very little to do beyond the common exigencies of military service. I was drilling my men and perfecting myself in my technical studies, when I was called upon to undertake a mission, of which the result was nearly fatal to me and to one of my near relatives.

'It was on the 9th of Thermidor. Great anxiety prevailed throughout all the sections of the capital; for all kinds of rumours concerning the result of the struggle in the Convention were afloat. In our quarter we hurried to our usual place of meeting, and I was listening to what was going on, when there came a message from the Commune ordering me to go to the Place de Grève with my company. I hesitated a little, and I deemed it prudent to take the advice of the meeting. The answer

was that I was bound to obey, since the order was signed by the adjutant-general. I went even further. Being personally acquainted with the members of the Local Committee, I consulted them, observing that I still considered myself as belonging to the section, in spite of the exceptional circumstances which placed me under the orders of superior officers who had no concern in our local affairs. The members of the Committee praised me for my frankness, but were all of opinion that I should obey the order I had received.

'I therefore called my men together, arranged my cannon into batteries, and started for the Hôtel-de-Ville. There we waited for orders. Other companies arrived, and no one knew the reason of this display of arms. Some said that the National Convention was dissolved, and that a large number of its members had made a conspiracy; the others assumed that it was the Commune, at the head of which were Robespierre, Couthon, Saint-Just, and Henriot, general commander of the National Guard, which was dissolved. Public opinion hesitated between these two versions. When there is discord between the different authorities which constitute public power, the officer, whose mission it is to obey, is much perplexed. At such a time of anarchy, officers were exposed to become the blind instruments of some faction, and this is just what happened to me.

'We were still waiting for orders when a young man, who wore the uniform of a superior officer, came up, and ordered us to report ourselves to the Commune. I immediately obeyed, and, accompanied by my uncle—sub-

lieutenant—and Sergeant Masson, I went up the stairs. We were ushered into a hall, where we had to certify our presence. We then retired.

'A moment after, the same officer, followed by an escort of cavalry, came to order us to go to the Préfecture de Police. We marched away, and, after crossing the court of the Sainte-Chapelle, we halted in the smaller Rue de Jerusalem. The Prefecture, or Bureau Central, as it was then called, was of the province of the Commune. We remained shut up in an enclosure near the Palais du Justice, without any news of what was going on outside, and not daring to move for fear of transgressing our orders.

'All was finished at eight o'clock P.M. The Convention triumphed; Robespierre and his friends were arrested; the Hôtel-de-Ville was captured. Up to the last moment we had no knowledge of these events. At last three citizens of our section came to apprise us of what had occurred, and to urge upon us the necessity of a prompt return to our quarter. We had been the ignorant and passive auxiliaries of the conquered party, and our predicament was very awkward. The three citizens only came at ten o'clock. On hearing of the peril to which we were exposed, we immediately prepared to go. The commander of the picket of the Prefecture wanted to oppose our retreat; but I threatened to fire upon him and his men, and we marched away without hindrance. Without delay I went to our head-quarters, where I drew up a report of our doings during the day.

'It soon became evident that I was very seriously

compromised. My uncle and I were committed for trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal, for the passive part we had enacted during the day. We were arrested (as also Sergeant Masson) in the first days of Fructidor. The main charge against us was that we had signed a presence sheet at the Hôtel-de-Ville. On this sheet, after our signatures, an unknown hand had written, "And have taken the oath." Now we had taken no oath at all; for had such a proposal been made to us, we could not but have perceived the snare prepared for us. This false mention had therefore been written after our departure. Many more citizens had been deceived in the same way.

'We were sent to the Conciergerie. The indictment mentioned the names of forty-one accomplices incarcerated with us. I was charged, among other crimes, "with having been seen in divers groups exciting to rebellion against the National Convention; with having helped to free Henriot, arrested by order of the Committee of General Safety; in having participated in the conspiracy of the Commune." As may be seen, I had good grounds for uneasiness; for one of these charges with the preceding Tribunal would have been enough to forfeit my life; but this Tribunal had been broken up after the events of Thermidor 9, and the superseding court was more moderate and indulgent.

'We were tried on the 15th of Fructidor. No witness could be found in corroboration of the first charge. As to the second, Citizen Dobourt, president of the Tribunal, happened to be among those who were present when

Henriot was rescued, and he affirmed that I had nothing to do with it. I could have brought twenty witnesses to the effect that my company had not stirred during the whole of the day. As to the third charge, it was the most serious, since we had really signed the presence-sheet. But our counsels, seeing that it was impossible to deny the fact, urged the question of intention, and this steered us out of danger.

'We were, I should add, admirably defended. Masson's cause was taken up by M. Boutron, my uncle's by M. Julienne, and mine by M. Chauveau-Lagarde. The latter, who had defended Marie-Antoinette, was especially eloquent. After some consideration the Tribunal acquitted us, and this decision was received with cheers. I confess that I felt much relieved. I had passed my days of captivity in the very same cell where Marie-Antoinette had been imprisoned. I had slept on her bed, and this circumstance suggested to me the idea of appealing to M. Chauveau-Lagarde, who had defended her.

When we were discharged, I ran to a room in the Palais de Justice where I knew my father was waiting for the issue of the trial. I embraced him, weeping with joy, but I was surprised to find a cloud over his countenance. Alas! I had forgotten that out of forty-one prisoners forty had been acquitted, but that the forty-first was to die on the scaffold on the following day.' [1]

[1] Joseph Julien Lemonnier, Civil Commissioner of the section of the Hôtel-de-Ville, executed on the 16th of Fructidor.

This manuscript speaks for itself. It shows us the son of the executioner of 1793 threatened in his turn with the paternal axe—a prisoner in the same cell as some of the royal victims of the Revolution, and appearing in his turn before the same Tribunal.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE DEATH OF ROBESPIERRE.

ROBESPIERRE'S lease of power had nearly come to an end. A reaction had set in, and the dictator's enemies leagued together and began to plot his overthrow and death. He had at first for enemies the friends of Danton and Camille Desmoulins, a few deputies of that faction of the Convention that was called the *Plaine*, and the deputies he had personally attacked for their conduct during their missions. His pretensions to Spartan purity, his dogmatic and absolute way of speaking, the authority he had gained, his very eminent qualities of statesmanship, as well as his ambition and his disdain for the prejudices of justice and humanity, had excited animosity and envy. When almost all had a right to suppose that not only their liberty but their lives were in danger, all met on the common ground of relentless hostility.

Tallien was the bitterest of Robespierre's foes. He had two lives to defend—his own, and that of a woman

[1] The circumstantial account of the execution of Robespierre, Saint-Just, and Couthon is as furnished to the editor of these Memoirs by his father, who had them from Charles Henri Sanson.

he loved—Madame de Fontenay, daughter of Cabarrus, the banker, arrested at Robespierre's bidding. The whole of the Montagne was united in one common thought—the overthrow of the triumvirs; for when Robespierre was spoken of, Couthon and Saint-Just were always included in the anathema. At Tallien's instigation the anti-Robespierrist coalition grew stronger every day; but Robespierre was so feared that no one yet attempted to attack him openly. The storm did not burst for a long time, and at certain moments it was doubtful whether Robespierre's enemies would conquer; but when it did burst on the 9th of Thermidor, its fury was so irresistible that the dictator was swept away, and could not even say a word. His arrest, and that of Saint-Just, Couthon, and Lebas, was decreed.

While the Convention was sealing the fate of its most formidable members, another strange scene was taking place on the way to the guillotine. Forty-five prisoners had been condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal. Just as sentence was being passed, the report that Robespierre and his friends were about to be judged in their turn reached the Tribunal. There was immense excitement, especially among the convicts, who hoped that this circumstance might save their lives. Charles Henri Sanson, who was superintending the toilet of the convicts, was not less excited, for he felt that things might go otherwise on the morrow. He therefore determined to try and gain time, and finally to obtain the postponement of the execution for twenty-four hours. He supposed that the first thought of the

Convention would be for the unfortunate creatures who were going to suffer by his hands. He went to the Palais de Justice in quest of Fouquier-Tinville, but this terrible functionary had just left it. However, my grandfather was shown the house where he had gone to dine. He found him, and exaggerating the state of effervescence of the faubourgs, he suggested the necessity of putting off the execution. Fouquier answered with a gesture of impatience: 'This has nothing to do with us. Sentence has been passed; nothing can impede its immediate execution.'

Charles Henri Sanson returned to the Conciergerie. The sinister preparations for death were terminated, the forty-five prisoners were ready. Some were weeping, others praying—all were in the highest state of excitement, for the agitation of the executioner, no less than the confusion of the judges, had escaped their notice, At last my grandfather gave the signal for departure, but he said to Larivière: 'We shall not go further than the Bastille; people are so tired of this sort of thing that they will deliver the prisoners and prevent the execution. So much the better!'

A few cries of 'Mercy!' 'No guillotine!' rose on the quays, but that was all. The crowd was so compact on the Place de la Bastille that the *cortége* advanced with much difficulty. The cries now became more numerous and more vehement. My grandfather, who was in the first cart, bent towards a young man named Couter de Boulot, who was near him, and said:

'It seems to me that our parts are about to change,

and that *we* have a chance of being executed in your stead.'

The poor fellow's intellect was so confused that he did not seem to understand.

'Yes,' continued Charles Henri, 'if I were in your place and you in mine, I don't know whether I could resist the temptation of escaping.'

Couter de Boulot looked at Charles Henri, but did not move; but one of the women understood Charles Henri's intention, for she immediately addressed the crowd:

'Mercy, citizens! we are not enemies of the people! Save us, save us!'

This was a signal for a chorus of prayers, sobs, and moans from the other carts. My grandfather's assistants were as moved as he was, and certainly would have offered no resistance had some attempt been made to remove the prisoners from their hands. But the people would not move; vain expressions of compassion rose from the thick masses of heads, but nothing more. At one moment the pressure was so great around the carts, that it was impossible to advance. Those who were nearer to the convicts and the executioner were, however, seized with a strange panic. An opening was made, and there was no further pretext for delaying the execution, which duly took place.

On his return home, my grandfather found an order of Fouquier-Tinville's to go to the Palais de Justice, and remain there all night.

The members of the Convention who had been

arrested had for some time been detained in the office of the Committee of Public Safety, and from thence they had been taken to prison; Robespierre the elder to the Luxembourg, Saint-Just to the Écossais, Couthon to La Bourbe, Lebas to the house of justice of the department, and Robespierre the younger to La Force. Just as they were leaving the Tuileries, Henriot, the general-in-chief of the National Guards, and his aides-de-camp were brought in.

On the other hand the Commune was not inactive, and was doing its utmost to save Robespierre and struggle with the Convention. It proclaimed insurrection, and sent emissaries to all parts of Paris to call together the National Guard, in order to overthrow the Convention. A part of the artillery of the National Guard took Robespierre's part, and proposed to attack the Tuileries. With their assistance Coffinhal, who was looking for Robespierre, broke into the office of the Committee, found Henriot, and freed him. Henriot mounted a horse and resumed the command of the National Guard; but instead of marching on the Assembly, he galloped off to the Hôtel-de-Ville, there to take the advice of Robespierre, who, on his side, had been freed by his friends. Henriot's want of boldness in this circumstance saved the Convention, the members of which had time to organise their own forces; and while Henriot, Robespierre, Saint-Just, Lebas, Couthon, Robespierre the younger, Payan, and Dumas were losing time in bootless deliberation, Léonard Bourdon, one of the representatives, supported by a large number of National

Guards, surrounded the Hôtel-de-Ville, and rushed into the hall where Robespierre and his friends had taken refuge. There still remains considerable doubt as to what then took place. This is the account given by Barrère in his report of the 10th of Thermidor: 'The guilty ones were seized with terror when the sections entered the Hôtel-de-Ville. Lebas blew his brains out, Couthon wounded himself, Robespierre the younger jumped out of a window, Robespierre the elder attempted to commit suicide. Saint-Just was captured, Dumas sought shelter in a garret, Henriot took to flight.' History has distrusted Barrère's official account, for it is in glaring contradiction with the account furnished to the Convention by Léonard Bourdon on the morning of the 10th. He introduced a gendarme who, he said, had killed two of the conspirators with his own hand, and these conspirators he takes care to designate by name: 'We found Robespierre the elder armed with a dagger, which this brave gendarme wrenched from his hand; he *also* struck Couthon, who was also armed.'

Toulongeon, an ex-member of the Constituent Assembly who wrote in 1812, affirms that Robespierre's jaw was broken by a pistol-shot. There is, then, every reason to think that Robespierre did not attempt to commit suicide; M. Louis Blanc shows this very clearly in the notes which follow the seventh chapter of the tenth volume of his 'History of the Revolution.' According to M. Louis Blanc, Médal, the gendarme mentioned by Léonard Bourdon, entered the hall of the Hotel-de-Ville long before the latter; recognising

Robespierre, he fired a pistol at him and wounded him.

To M. Louis Blanc's conclusive demonstration I can add an affirmation which, modest as it is, is worth consideration. Médal was one of the judicial gendarmes whom my father saw almost daily. Promoted to the rank of officer Médal left the corps, but the reason of this promotion was a secret to no one; and, at a time when the attempted suicide of Robespierre was accepted by the gravest historians, my father used to tell me of Médal's pistol-shot, the influence it had on the man's promotion, and the anger felt by his comrades—many of whom were rabid partisans of Robespierre—at what they considered a piece of favouritism.

Howbeit, a quarter of an hour after Léonard Bourdon's entrance, the situation was such as Barrère described it. Maximilian Robespierre was lying on the ground, seriously wounded and covered with blood; Robespierre the younger, after taking off his shoes and walking for some time on the broad cornice of the first floor of the Hôtel-de-Ville, had jumped down on the bayonets of the soldiers below. Couthon, slightly wounded, was carried by his friends as far as the quay. Henriot was not better off than his companions; he would not commit suicide, and Coffinhal, indignant at his want of nerve, threw him out of a window into one of the interior courtyards, where he fell on a heap of broken glass. He had strength enough to crawl into a drain where he was found some hours after. Saint-Just, Payan, and Lescot-Fleuriot were arrested.

Robespierre the elder was placed on a hand-barrow and carried to the Convention. He was deposited on a large table in one of the rooms of the Committee of Public Safety; and there he remained, from three to eight o'clock A.M., a prey to the sarcasms of those who two days before trembled before him. At last his wounds were dressed and he was taken to the Conciergerie, where Saint-Just, Couthon, Payan, and the others had preceded him.

At five o'clock A.M. the public prosecutor ordered my grandfather to erect the guillotine on the Place de Grève. Charles Henri Sanson had scarcely traversed the court-yard of the Palais when he was recalled and told to wait. A message from the Committee of Public Safety altered the first instructions given to Fouquier; the Place de Grève, which had at first been selected for the execution because of the hatred felt for Robespierre in the neighbouring sections, was abandoned, and the final decision was that Robespierre should be executed on the Place de la Révolution. As some doubts remained as to the disposition of the inhabitants of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, Charles Henri was instructed to remove the scaffold to its new scene by a roundabout route.

He set out with his assistants at six o'clock in the morning; neither he nor his brother, therefore, were present when Robespierre and his companions arrived at the Conciergerie, but he was informed of what took place by the turnkeys. The scaffold was taken down and transferred to the carts. During this operation an im-

mense crowd assembled in the Place du Trône. In spite of the Robespierrist tendencies of the Faubourg, no hostile feeling was manifested, but as the carts moved away more than one cried: 'A good journey to you, but don't come back.' A compact mass, in which young people were in a majority, escorted my grandfather and his assistants, and when they reached the Place de la Révolution the escort was so numerous that the gendarmes had great difficulty in clearing the spot where the scaffold was to be erected. This was not done before two o'clock P.M.

My grandfather and father had gone back to the Conciergerie at mid-day. There was as much excitement inside the prison as outside. All the prisoners had been so near death that they could hardly believe their senses. As I previously stated, Robespierre had been brought between eight and nine o'clock; he had been deposited on the bed in which Danton had slept one night. He did not utter a single groan; he only spoke two or three times, and, on account of his wounds, his words were scarcely intelligible. Some linen and water were offered to him; he washed his wounds and tried to sleep, but could not do so. He then rose and asked for ink and paper, but formal orders had been given, and the turnkey refused with the evasiveness of language usual to his profession. Robespierre made a gesture of anger and threat, but he immediately regained his self-possession.

Robespierre the younger, who was badly hurt, was in a neighbouring cell; Couthon was in the head turnkey's room; and Saint-Just occupied a cell which, in remem-

brance of the massacre of September, had been called 'the national slaughterhouse.'

The Tribunal was to sit at ten o'clock, but an unexpected difficulty arose. According to the law it was necessary that the identity of the prisoners should be established by two members of the Commune; but as all the members of the Commune were implicated in Robespierre's conspiracy this formality could not be accomplished. Fouquier-Tinville acquainted the Convention with this difficulty; the Assembly suggested that the local committees should send delegates with the object of identifying the accused.

The Tribunal began to sit at half-past twelve. Seillein presided; Fouquier-Tinville, assisted by Liendon, his substitute, was at his usual place. Robespierre the elder was carried in on a hand-barrow; his younger brother was supported by two gendarmes; two other gendarmes carried Couthon in an arm-chair. After being duly identified they were taken back to their cells, and the Tribunal continued to proceed against those who were brought up after the ringleaders.

Liendon, Fouquier's substitute, had ordered that the culprits should be 'prepared' as they left the Tribunal, in order to save time. At two o'clock Charles Henri Sanson, his son, his brother, and two assistants entered Robespierre's cell. He was lying down, his eyes fixed on the window facing his bed. He did not move when they entered, nor did he even look round. My father asked him to get up; his eye was still brilliant and seemed to ask 'Why?' Before an answer was returned

he understood, sat up, and stretched out his neck, expressing a desire not to leave his bed ; but, as this could not be done, the assistants lifted him up and placed him on a chair. A large piece of linen which covered his broken jaw was taken off, and while my great-uncle was cutting his hair Charles Henri Sanson held up the bandages. When the operation was finished my grandfather dressed again the wound, and Robespierre acknowledged his kindness by a nod.

Saint-Just was walking up and down his cell when the executioners entered. He was slightly pale, but his eye was bright and proud. He sat down without a word and allowed my grand-uncle to cut his hair. He then held out his hands to Charles Henri before being asked, and as the latter said, 'Not yet,' Saint-Just murmured, ''Tis a pity! I am in a hurry.' These were the only words he uttered, and to the death he retained an air of superb indifference.

Couthon was the only one of the triumvirs who showed discouragement, but his prostration was not due to fear but to sadness.

At four o'clock the Tribunal had identified a sufficiently large number of outlaws. There was another exchange of messages between the judicial authorities and the Committee of Public Safety concerning the convicts who were to be executed on the same day. Twenty-one individuals were selected for immediate punishment. These were: Henriot, late general of the National Guard; Lavalette, late general of the Army of the North ; Dumas, late president of the Revolutionary Tri-

bunal; Payan, agent of the Commune; Vivier, one of the judges of the Tribunal and president of the Jacobins; Lescot-Fleuriot, late mayor of Paris; Simon, the cobbler (keeper of the son of Louis XVI.), and ten other municipal officers. Henriot had had an eye pulled out in the scuffle which attended his arrest; he was horrible to behold. Nothing could be more dismal than the *cortége* as it descended the staircase of the Conciergerie; two dying men and a cripple were at the head of it, and a corpse was in the rear. Lebas' body followed Robespierre, as Valazé's corpse had followed the Girondins.

At half-past four the carts appeared on the quay. No crowd ever equalled that which was assembled to see the last of Robespierre. Most historians have related his sinister journey to the scaffold, and I have little information to give beyond what has been already written. The drama was taking place around the executioners rather than with them, in the streets rather than in the carts. Maximilian Robespierre, seated[1] on some straw which one of the assistants had provided for him, was leaning against the side of the cart in which he was; his face was swollen and livid. The fiercest cries, the most vehement exclamations, left him undisturbed; he kept his eyes closed during the whole of the journey. His brother, who had attempted suicide by jumping out of a window, was almost insensible. Couthon appeared astonished at the rage of the multitude, and in his eyes, which were very soft and intelligent, the utmost surprise could be read.

[1] Not *standing*, as M. Michelet asserts that he was, in his *History of the Revolution*, vol. vii. p. 515.

When Dumas answered to some passing taunt, 'My only regret is that I did not get all these blackguards guillotined,' Couthon shook his head thoughtfully. Saint-Just was the only one who openly affronted the storm; and he did so without anger, bombast, or weakness. The firmness of his convictions probably elevated his mind above these manifestations. Once only did he look down; a woman near the cart was insulting Robespierre, and charging him with the death of her daughter. Saint-Just smiled bitterly, and he was heard to say, as if speaking to himself: 'Her daughter! Perhaps she would have sold her for twenty livres.'

When the carts reached the house of the Duplay family, where Robespierre used to live, the drivers were obliged to stop. Rings were formed around the carts, and the people danced madly and furiously. A child brought a pail of blood from a neighbouring butcher's, and the door and walls of Robespierre's abode were smeared with it. It was useless for Charles Henri Sanson to order the gendarmes to clear the way; the gendarmes joined the people and a deplorable scene followed. This disgusting manifestation of feeling on the part of the agents of authority had always been allowed since the Queen's execution, and there was no help for it. Robespierre opened his eyes and closed them again when the cart came to a standstill, but this supreme insult left him as unmoved as before.

It was a quarter-past six o'clock when the *cortége* at last reached the Place de la Révolution. The convicts were removed from the carts. Gobeau, ex-substitute of

the public prosecutor and member of the Commune, was the first who suffered. Maximilian Robespierre stood leaning against one of the carts, his back turned to the scaffold. His brother was held up by two gendarmes, his wounds not allowing him to stand without support. Couthon was in a chair specially provided for him. When Saint-Just's turn came he embraced the cripple, and in passing before the Robespierres he pronounced the only word of 'Farewell!' His voice betrayed no emotion. Robespierre the elder nodded in answer, turned round, and looked on while his friend was being strapped to the weigh-plank. Robespierre was the tenth to appear on the platform; he went up the steps of the scaffold without any assistance whatever. His demeanour exhibited neither weakness nor assumed bravery; his eye was cold and calm. Charles Henri told one of his men to take off the linen in which the prisoner's face was wrapped; the man did as he was directed and uncovered the broken jaw. The pain must have been horrible, for Robespierre uttered a fearful cry. The blood trickled down from the jaw and the mouth remained wide open. He was immediately strapped down, and, less than a minute after, the knife fell. The head was shown to the crowd, just like Danton's and the King's.

A natural wish to contradict whatever may be of a nature to cast undeserved discredit on my family, induces me here to address an observation to an eminent historian. In his 'History of the Revolution' (p. 265, vol. x.), M. Louis Blanc says: 'When Robespierre was

on the platform of the guillotine, the executioner, a rabid royalist, having, by a rough and barbarous movement, torn away the bandage which covered his wounds, the unexpected pain which shot through his face drew a piercing cry from him,' &c. I have no wish to clear my grandfather of the charge of royalism which M. Louis Blanc brings against him, but I cannot allow the charge of cruelty to pass without protest. The energy which Charles Henri Sanson displayed in trying to put a stop to the hideous saturnalia of the Rue Saint-Honoré—and this energy was remarked by many—gives the exact measure of the sanguinary instincts of this *rabid royalist.* In this circumstance, as in that alluded to by M. Louis Blanc, my grandfather forgot his own antipathy only to think of the strict and humane discharge of his duty. Robespierre's wound was covered by a wet piece of linen which was made fast with a *napkin.* Another piece of linen surrounded the forehead and the back of the head. Had my grandfather attempted to execute Robespierre with these bandages, the most serious consequences might have ensued; and I think, speaking from a professional point of view, I have a right to assert that, however sharp was the unfortunate man's pain, it spared him torments far more terrible.

CHAPTER XLVI.

LESURQUES.

ALTHOUGH it is impossible for me to mention all the instances of capital punishment that occurred in the course of the French Revolution, I cannot pass to another phasis of these Memoirs without dwelling on one of the many criminal cases of the period, which is still, and is likely to remain, one of the most notorious *causes célèbres*. I allude to the Lesurques affair.

At the beginning of the year 4 of the French Republic considerable terror prevailed in the provinces in consequence of the sinister deeds of a large gang of bandits who styled themselves the *Chauffeurs* (literally 'warmers'). Almost every day the news came of the capture of some castle or farm, attended with atrocious scenes in which these formidable malefactors surpassed the cruelty of former judicial tortures. The name of 'Chauffeurs' was but too significant; the gang had chosen the locality of La Beauce for the scene of their operations, and their least cruel crime was murder. These ruffians, with the object of compelling their victims to point out the spot where their property was concealed, had invented an atrocious infliction. They

lighted a large fire and brought the feet of the victim in contact with the flames until a confession was extorted. The inhabitants of La Beauce were so terrified that they dared not venture out of their houses even in broad daylight.

Just when outrages of this kind were being perpetrated with the utmost audacity, a report reached Paris to the effect that the mail of Lyons had been waylaid. The courier and the postilion had been found in a lifeless state at a short distance from each other, and the only clue found near the scene of the murder was a deserted horse and cart.

The police immediately set to work. Citizen Daubanton, justice of the peace of the section of the Pont Neuf, was entrusted with the care of discovering the guilty parties. A man of the name of Courriol was arrested at Chateau-Thierry, and he was found in possession of sums and letters which were eventually proved to have been stolen from the mail. Courriol was transferred to Paris, together with one of his friends named Golier, and a third individual named Guesno, who lived in the same house as Courriol. This treble capture, however, threw but little light on the mystery. Courriol alone was seriously compromised ; but nothing could be proved against Golier and Guesno, whose social position and antecedents were above question. Guesno was finally set at liberty. He was returning to the prefecture of police to ask for his passport, when he met one of his compatriots of the name of Lesurques, and forthwith he told him of the unpleasant position in which

he had been placed. His story was not finished when they reached the prefecture, and Guesno proposed to Lesurques to come in with him and hear the end of his account while his passport was being looked for.

Scarcely, however, had Lesurques and his companion entered the ante-chamber of M. Daubanton's closet when they became aware that two of the witnesses called on behalf of the prosecution in the Mail affair were looking at them with more than ordinary curiosity. These witnesses, who were women, thought they identified Guesno and Lesurques as two of the supposed murderers, whom they had seen at a short distance from the place where the crime had been committed; and they hastened to intimate the fact to M. Daubanton. This magistrate was much perplexed, for it appeared to him highly improbable that two criminals would thus expose themselves to instant recognition, and rush into the lion's den. Lesurques, especially, had no reason whatever for coming to the prefecture; and as to Guesno, his presence was sufficiently justified. But the evidence of the two women was so positive that he felt it his duty to arrest Lesurques and Guesno.

The two prisoners had great chances of escape, in spite of the affirmations of the women, so long as the case remained in the hands of M. Daubanton; but, for unknown reasons, the affair was sent for investigation to the criminal tribunal of Melun; and the instructing magistrate of this last court, instead of imitating the prudence of his Parisian colleague and trying to dis-

cover the truth, applied himself to the collection of proofs of the guilt of the prisoners. A terrible indictment was drawn up against Lesurques and Guesno, who were formally tried, together with Courriol and four other individuals named Laborde, Bruer, Bernard, and Richard. The trial was about to begin when the prisoners formally asked to be tried by the criminal court of Paris, a petition which was granted.

The delayed affair was at last brought up for investigation before the Paris Tribunal on Thermidor 15. The president of the Tribunal, Jérôme Gohier, member of the Legislative Assembly, was a harsh, obstinate man, and throughout the trial he displayed excessive severity and exaggerated zeal. Fifteen witnesses on behalf of the defence proved an *alibi* in favour of Lesurques, eighty-three others spoke highly of his well-known respectability; but their evidence went for nothing in opposition to those who, with singular pertinacity, maintained that Lesurques was one of those who had been seen lurking near the scene of the murder on the night when it was committed. One of the witnesses for the defence, a countryman of Lesurques named Legrand, jeweller of the Palais Royal, said he could corroborate his evidence by an entry of a transaction with Lesurques which, he said, had taken place on the very day of the crime. The book was called for, and it was perceived that an eight had been altered into a nine. At the requisition of the public prosecutor the unfortunate Legrand was immediately arrested on a charge of perjury.

This severity but too plainly indicated the result of the trial. The fifteen witnesses who certified an *alibi* were not believed, and the evidence of the two women, together with that of five other doubtful witnesses, was declared conclusive. As for Lesurques he did not for a moment cease to maintain his innocence.

As the jurors were preparing to retire, a woman who had at first been arraigned, Madeleine Bréban, mistress of Courriol, begged the judge's leave to make an important statement. She declared that out of the six prisoners at the bar her lover alone was guilty, and that Guesno and Lesurques were the victims of an extraordinary and fatal resemblance with two of the real murderers named Vidal and Dubosc. The president, whose duty it was to investigate this strange and capital fact, especially after the evidence of Lesurques' witnesses, drily answered that the trial was closed, and that it was too late to take evidence; and the Tribunal, after hearing the verdict of the jury, acquitted Guesno and Bruer, condemned Pierre-Thomas Richard to penal servitude for twenty years and to public exhibition for six hours, and passed sentence of death on Courriol, Lesurques, and David Bernard. On hearing his condemnation, Lesurques, who had been firm and collected throughout the trial, lost his self-possession, and raising his hands to heaven he exclaimed:

'The crime which is imputed to me is indeed atrocious and deserves death; but if it is horrible to murder on the high road it is not less so to abuse the law and convict an innocent man. A day will come

when my innocence will be recognised, and then may my blood fall upon the jurors who have so lightly convicted me, and on the judges who have influenced their decision!'

Strange to say, Courriol, the really guilty convict, appeared but slightly preoccupied with his own fate. When he was again in the Conciergerie he thought only of corroborating the declaration of Madeleine Bréban, his mistress, and of saving the life of Bernard, whom he knew to be but slightly guilty, and of Lesurques, whose innocence he was fully aware of. He confirmed his mistress's evidence, and denounced Vidal and Dubosc as the real perpetrators of the crime, adding that Madeleine Bréban, who was free, could assist the judicial authorities in the apprehension of the culprits. Two days after he repeated his declaration, at the same time revealing the names of other accomplices altogether unknown.

Other witnesses asserted that, during the trial, Madeleine Bréban had spoken to them of Lesurques' innocence. One of them said that he had seen the two culprits confounded with Lesurques and Guesno. This resemblance had been increased, as far as the former was concerned, by Dubosc putting on a fair wig, which completed his resemblance to Lesurques. The Tribunal, however, refused to consider these new facts, and the execution was about to take place when the barrister who had defended Lesurques appealed to the Directoire on behalf of his client. Public opinion was strongly in favour of the convict; and this, more than anything else,

induced the Directoire to delay the execution. Meanwhile Courriol sent them the following letter:

'Is it, then, true that my crime is to provoke a double murder? The truthful declarations I have constantly made have not saved two innocent men. Can I at least hope that, to avenge their death, you will give express orders for the apprehension of the four individuals I have designated, and who are my only accomplices? The truth will be discovered before long, but before this, the innocent prisoners will perish. The *innocents!* I repeat it, and cannot help repeating to the last minute of my life.'

The Directoire referred the affair to the Conseil des Cinq-cents. A committee was appointed, and Count Siméon was appointed reporter. The choice was ill advised; Count Siméon was more engrossed by the technicalities of the law than moved by a real sense of justice. His long and declamatory report went against the unhappy Lesurques, whose fate was henceforth sealed.

Lesurques heard the fatal news with the stoicism which had not for a single moment forsaken him. He bade farewell to his family, sent a lock of his hair to each of his children, and prepared for death with the coolness of an undisturbed conscience. On the 9th of Brumaire, year 5 (October 30, 1796), my grandfather and father proceeded to the Conciergerie, and found the convicts in the hall, through which so many had passed during the Reign of Terror. David Bernard was in a state of utter prostration; Courriol, on the contrary, was excited. As

to Lesurques, he was as calm and fearless as ever. When he saw my grandfather, whose white hair sufficiently designated him as the chief executioner, he stepped up to him, and said, holding out a sealed letter:

'Citizen, I hope for the honour of human justice that your functions do not often compel you to shed the blood of a guiltless man; I hope, therefore, that you will grant the last request of a man who is about to suffer for what he has not done. Be good enough to keep this letter, which may hereafter contribute to the restoration of the honour of my wife and poor children, whereof they have been so unjustly deprived.'

While one of his assistants was cutting the unfortunate man's hair, my grandfather read the paper Lesurques had just given him. It was a letter addressed to Dubosc, the man in whose place he was condemned. It ran as follows:

'*To Citizen Dubosc.*

'Citizen Dubosc,—I do not even know you, and I am going to suffer the death which was reserved for you. Be satisfied with the sacrifice of my life. Should you ever be brought to account, remember my three children and their mother, who are disgraced for ever, and do not prolong their agony. Confess that you are the man.'

After reading the letter my grandfather approached Lesurques and assured him that he would send a copy of it to all the papers. I need hardly add that Charles Henri kept his word.

All preparations were now concluded. Lesurques, of his own choice, was dressed in spotless white, symbol of his innocence. He was the first to take his place in the cart; Courriol followed him, and Bernard, who had fainted, was deposited on the straw. Then began the most dismal and extraordinary journey that ever was made from the Conciergerie to the Place de Grève. Lesurques and Courriol stood in front. At every turn of the wheel, Courriol exclaimed in a piercing voice:

'I am guilty! Lesurques is innocent!'

And for twenty minutes, that is during the whole way to the guillotine, he perseveringly repeated his awful protest against justice. The crowd was horrified, and there were few who did not believe the murderer who confessed his crime, but who proclaimed his companion's innocence. Courriol again repeated his words at the foot of the scaffold with extraordinary energy and vehemence, and the thump of the knife but just covered his supreme shriek:

'Lesurques is innocent!'

Lesurques did not utter a word. He looked at Courriol with a touching expression of gratitude, and when his turn came he advanced firmly, saying:

'May God forgive my judges as I forgive them!'

The rehabilitation which the unfortunate Lesurques hoped for is yet to come. It was in vain that his family sought it with the most noble and interesting constancy; vainly have journalists, writers, and public opinion generally supported their efforts. The judicial authorities have perseveringly refused to recognise this flagrant

miscarriage of justice.[1] And yet the innocence of Lesurques was amply demonstrated a short time after his execution: all the real murderers of the courier of Lyons designated by Courriol were captured; Dubosc himself, whose fatal resemblance to Lesurques was the cause of the latter's death, was taken and tried. Dubosc was a ruffian of the worst kind. He denied the crime, doubtless in the hope of saving his life; but his protestations were of no avail; he was executed just four years after Lesurques. Two years later, another murderer designated by Courriol was taken and executed; his name was Roussy. Before his death he made a full confession and entirely cleared Lesurques, who had no acquaintance whatever with any of the murderers of the courier of Lyons.

Meanwhile the family of Lesurques were in the horrors of want and despair—their property was confiscated, his wife and mother became mad. The latter died in a lunatic asylum; the former only recovered her senses some years after. Five-and-twenty years elapsed before any notice of the 'affaire Lesurques' was taken by the State; it was only under the Restoration that the indefatigable champions of the Lesurques family obtained a revision of the sentence as far as material interests were concerned. The Minister of Finances at last recognised that the confiscation of Lesurques' property was illegal, and this property was duly restored to the children. But with this the descendants of

[1] It is only two years since the grand-children of Lesurques made another ineffectual attempt to obtain the revision of his trial.—ED. N.

Lesurques were not satisfied. With a perseverance which can only be compared to that shown by the family of Lally-Tollendal, they have appealed to justice under every successive Government; but, less fortunate than the son of the governor of French India, they are still waiting for justice, and the French courts have not seen the last of them yet.

I have now exhausted the documents and notes left by my ancestors, and particularly by my grandfather and father. There is a gap in the information of the latter; it may appear a serious one since it extends over nearly fifteen years, but the omission, for which, of course, I am in no way responsible, is more apparent than real. Executions were not very frequent under the Consulate and the Empire, and I cannot conscientiously draw upon my imagination by putting together the fragmentary information gathered from conversation with my father on the executions of Fouquier-Tinville, Carrain, Babœuf, Cadoudal, &c. My task is now wholly personal: I have to relate my own impressions and what I have seen. The impressions of an executioner may seem to the reader almost as interesting as the events he has to chronicle; this may be my excuse for dilating upon my education, and the circumstances which unavoidably led me to embrace a profession which, although it had been that of nine generations of my ancestors, was none the less contrary to my tastes and aspirations.

CHAPTER XLVII.

MY VOCATION.

I WAS born in 1799. My father's first intention was not that I should take to the guillotine. My grandmother as well as my mother were strongly opposed to the extension of the office to me. My grandfather was the only member of the family who differed from this view; and although I forgive him with all my heart, I am bound to state that it was owing to him that I appeared on the guillotine.

The old man, who had led as stormy a life as it was possible for a man of his profession to lead, laboured under the belief that an executioner, no more than a king, could abdicate. He had remained at his post while everything around him was sinking; all human powers had passed under his knife—royalty, genius, eloquence, virtue, patriotism; and a dark and morose humour had taken possession of the old man.

As far as my recollection extends, I remember that he was very fond of gardening. He used to walk every morning over his well-sanded garden, watering his flowers, and engrossing himself in the only occupation which gave him pleasure. I can still see him with his three-

cornered hat, his knee-breeches, and thin-bladed sword; he used to stop before the flowers he had reared himself, and he looked at them with something like tenderness. One day I remember that he exclaimed before a number of tulips of the finest red:

'How fresh, how red they are! If they saw them they would say that I water them with blood!'

Young as I was, these words struck me. Some days before I had heard an absurd vampire story which had left a deep impression on my mind. Somehow or other, the two ideas got together in my head, and in the evening I could not help asking my mother, as I was going to bed:

'Mamma, grandfather says he waters his flowers with blood; is it because he is a vampire?'

My mother started. 'Be quiet, Henri, be quiet,' she said; 'who told you those nasty things?'

I then related to her the vampire story, and what I had heard in the garden. She made me promise not to say anything more about it. The circumstance passed away from my mind for a time. I was reminded of it later, and then I understood what my grandfather meant.

Our position was more than prosperous; in spite of the losses we had incurred under the Monarchy through the wretched state of the finances, our fortune was considerable. Chirurgery had always been a very productive resource for our family. It is worth remarking that after the suppression of the right of *havage*, alluded to in the first part of this record, up to the establishment

in France of a regular administration, our salary was often nominal, for it was frequently left unpaid. It was only after the Revolution that we regularly received the remuneration attached to our office. It was mainly on their personal fortune that my ancestors subsisted. Howbeit the property which eventually came down to my hands was more than sufficient to guarantee my independence, and enable me not to have recourse to the guillotine to earn my bread. My family could then hope to see me forsake the traditional office without apprehension for my prospects. If my father, whose timid and good-natured disposition was altogether unfitted for his profession, had been unable to shirk it, it was in consequence of certain circumstances which could in no way affect me. As I said before, and as the reader may have seen, my grandfather had curious notions, before the Revolution, on the legitimacy of his office, and he had brought up his son in the idea that he should take his place after his death. Obedience was always the first of virtues in our family, and my father had obeyed his father, but not, however, without internal struggles; for I remember hearing my great-uncle, Charlemagne Sanson, say that more than once he had felt pity for his manifest distress in the executions which they both witnessed. Having submitted to his father's will, he however intended to educate me after his own fashion. He was deceived in his surmise, and I will presently explain how.

I had just completed my seventh year when my grandfather died. He was very old, and his last

moments were peaceful and free from suffering. Half an hour before his death he called my father to his bedside.

'Henri,' he said to him, 'I am going away, and I have to say to you a few parting words before I die. I am aware that you never liked your profession; I think, however, that I leave you a good example. Believe me, let us abide by the station which fate awarded to us. It is of no use to hope that the world will ever receive you: your origin can neither be forgotten nor forgiven. Do not take another occupation for yourself or your son. It would be a desertion from your duty. There has not been a single instance in our family of such desertion. Our family is certainly the most ancient and important in the profession; but others have done as we have done. For a long time I sincerely believed that we were very useful to society, and that in no profession were self-denial and devotion shown more than in ours, but I have seen such singular events that my opinions are slightly altered now. Some day we may be suppressed, just as many other things have been suppressed. Until then be certain that no one has a right to blame or insult you. You are not responsible for the blood you shed. Do not forget that the judge who passes sentence is more responsible than you are.'

The old man's strange legacy sealed my destiny.

I had then no notion of what all this meant. But a few days after my grandfather's death, I heard a conversation between my father and my mother, the words of which return to my memory, so much do they remind me of my sacrificed existence.

'Julia,' said my father, 'my father was right. It's of no use to try and get out of the groove. Henri would always be reminded of his origin by his more fortunate companions and friends, and he would be more unhappy in society than out of it. I don't want my son to blush for his father. Let him get as good an education as money can procure, but let him remain the son of Messieurs de Paris, and be true to his origin.'

My mother made some objections, but these my father firmly resisted.

'What profession could he possibly adopt? Everybody would spurn him. There is no law to prevent his entering some liberal profession; but the laws of society are more pitiless than those of the State. Were he a barrister, no one would ever consent to appeal to the services of an executioner's son, and it would be the same in every other direction. Believe me, we are providing for the best, and he will thank us afterwards for not making a "gentleman" of him.'

Had I been a little older when I heard this, I have no doubt that my impression would have been far deeper than it was. It was the first indistinct intuition I had of the future which was reserved for me.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MY EDUCATION.

APART from the domestic loss I have related in the preceding chapter, my childhood was happy and peaceful. My grandmother outlived her husband, and she shared with my mother the management of the house. Our life was retired, but quiet and pleasant. A very limited number of friends came to see us on Sundays, but their number grew thinner every day.

I must ask leave not to mention my mother's maiden name. She belonged to a family that was not of our profession, and the members of this family might be displeased if I revealed their relationship to me. Even my grandchildren might thereby discover their origin, for they know neither my name nor what I have been. I had a son, but he died; and the name of Sanson shall therefore die with me. Such are the cruel consequences of the reprobation which attaches to our functions, and which haunts us even in our retreat after we have been fortunate enough to shake off the yoke. The *bravi* of the Republic of Venice constantly wore masks, and thus concealed their identity. This advantage is denied us.

My mother gave me my first education. I was then

handed over to the care of an old abbé who continued my mother's task. My instructor was kind, considerate, and clever; and his death I considered as a great misfortune. The old man's demise caused much perplexity to my parents. They were fully aware of the necessity of not interrupting my studies; but, on the other hand, they hesitated very much about sending me to school, where, should my origin be discovered, I could not but be despised and cold-shouldered by my schoolfellows. I may add that my father's profession was not yet known to me; and although it was intended that I should follow the same calling, the secret had hitherto been kept back from me. It was to my mother that I was indebted for the continuation of my education. My father had just sold the old farm of Brie-Comte-Robert; my mother persuaded him to buy a country-house in the neighbourhood of Paris, and close to one of the rural colleges that are so numerous in the suburbs of the capital. Brunoy was at last selected. My father bought there a pretty villa, and the purchase was made under the name of M. de Longval. It was under the first name of my ancestors that I went to school.

The time I spent at Brunoy was the most pleasant period of my life. I liked school, and my schoolfellows liked me. But this happy existence was not of long duration; winter obliged my family to return to Paris. I had just completed my twelfth year. My studies were rather advanced; I had been taught music and drawing, for which I had a natural taste; and my father, knowing how pernicious is the interruption of

studies at a critical age, resolved to send me to school in Paris *under my real name.* Near our house was a large 'Institution' which followed the classes of the Lycée Charlemagne. My father called on M. Michel, the head master, and asked him if he would admit me to his school. M. Michel was somewhat taken aback, but after a moment of reflection he resolutely accepted, observing, however, that it was preferable that I should conceal my origin from my companions.

I then became a pupil of the Institution Michel. My life was pretty nearly what it had been at Brunoy. Every day we went to the Lycée under the superintendence of a crusty usher, and the remainder of our time was devoted to preparation. I was a day-boy, and I therefore enjoyed the privileges of home life. On Sundays we used to go to Brunoy, a place which I also saw with pleasure.

At Brunoy I had formed none of those juvenile friendships which are so common at school. It was otherwise at the Institution Michel. I became very friendly with two or three schoolfellows of mine, and especially with T——, whose parents, like mine, lived in the Faubourg Saint-Denis. He was also a day-boy. We used to leave school together in the evening, and we swore eternal friendship to each other. T—— was stronger than I was; he often protected me against bullies, and I never lost an opportunity of showing him my gratitude. We were then the best friends in the world, the Damon and Pythias of the Institution Michel. On our way home in the evening I used to leave T—— at his door,

and then I proceeded to our house in the Rue Neuve Saint-Jean. One evening, having left school earlier than usual, T—— had the evil inspiration to accompany me home. I accepted with much pleasure, and insisted that he should come in and see my family. But when my father and mother saw us, I was extremely surprised and vexed on noticing the coldness with which they greeted my friend. Although dinner was served they did not ask him to sit down, and poor T—— went away, no doubt wondering at the strangeness of this reception.

On the following day I went to school, still pondering on this event. I was not surprised, after what had occurred, to find T—— far more reserved with me than was his wont. Whenever I went up to him he tried to avoid me, and hardly answered my questions. This demeanour towards me did not pass away, as I hoped it would; T—— persisted in avoiding my company, and I was so vexed that I avoided him too, and tried to make other friends. But strange to say, all my other companions behaved with me in the same way.

I was much pained at this unexplainable revulsion of feeling. I bore it for a few days, but at last I could hold out no longer. One morning I was waiting with T—— for our drawing-master; I asked my late friend to explain his behaviour. 'You are cruel, T——,' said I to him; 'not only have you deprived me of your friendship, but you have spoken against me to our schoolfellows. I don't know what you told them, but there's not one of them who doesn't shun my company.'

T—— looked at me intently, as if trying to guess my real thoughts; he shrugged his shoulders and began drawing something on one of the pieces of paper lying on the table.

'Now, I don't intend to stand this,' I resumed, angry at his silence; 'you must explain. I don't want to be shunned and despised by my schoolfellows any longer. Is it because my father did not receive you well when you came to see us? I was sorrier than you were. But after all it was not my fault.'

T—— looked at me again, and then went on drawing.

'Will you speak, I ask again?' cried I, angrily.

Instead of answering he held out to me the drawing he had just finished. It was a kind of estrade, surmounted by two beams, at the top of which was a large knife. A man was strapped to a plank between the two beams, and another man stood by holding a rope. It was a guillotine, with the sufferer and the executioner. Under this terrible drawing T—— had written in large letters:

TUUS PATER CARNIFEX.

I had never seen the instrument of death, but the words explained the whole thing to me. I knew what *carnifex* meant. I uttered a shriek and ran away, still holding the paper which had just revealed to me the misfortune of my birth. I ran out of school and did not stop until I was before our door. I rang violently, rushed towards my mother, who had witnessed my

entrance, and fell fainting at her feet. The whole house was in an uproar. My father was out, and when he returned he asked me the cause of my agitation. I told him of what had occurred, and produced T——'s drawing. He doubtless thought that the time had come for an explanation, for he asked my mother and grandmother to leave us alone. He then told me what and who he was; he acquainted me with the history of our family, with the reasons that had induced fathers and sons to follow the same repulsive profession. He also told me of my grandfather's dying wish, and took advantage of what had occurred at school to show that I was bound to follow in his steps and those of my ancestors. I passed with him one of the most painful hours of my life; but I was young and submissive; his reasons were well put and forcible; I had no alternative but to submit, and I submitted. The fact that so many members of my family had been executioners impressed me more than anything else; it seemed to me that to discard them was impossible, that my destiny was traced in advance; and I accepted it with grief but with resignation.

On the following day my father received the visit of M. Michel, who had questioned T—— and discovered the reason of my disappearance. The worthy schoolmaster assured my father that he would prevent the recurrence of such a mishap as had occurred to me; that he had scolded T——, and threatened with instant expulsion whoever followed his example. My father asked me if I wished to return to school. I replied

that I did not, as the instruction I had already acquired was more than sufficient for the duties reserved for me. I nevertheless thanked M. Michel for his kindness. My father made no objection, and henceforth I enjoyed the fullest liberty.

I occupied myself with perhaps more wisdom than boys of my age usually do. I remained in the morning with my mother and grandmother. With the latter only did I dare to speak of my future career; with my mother I never thought of alluding to the subject. As to my father, I seldom saw him alone. I went out in the afternoon either to loaf about or to attend the lectures of well-known professors of the Sorbonne. It was thus that I took the habit—which I have retained to this day—of long walks. Since my adventure with T—— I thought everybody in the street recognised me. This led me to enter and leave our house stealthily, enveloped in a large cloak, and looking around uneasily. It was thus that after being gay and expansive I became dark and taciturn.

I returned home at dinner time, and no one ever thought of asking me where I had been and what I had been about. Up to the time when I acquired a strong liking for the drama, I used to spend my evenings in our drawing-room with my parents and the few friends who occasionally came to see us. None of our assistants were ever received there; the assistants lived in a separate part of the house.

We had a large library composed of rare books and MSS. I found there the treasures of ancient and

modern literature, and read them with avidity. It was thus that I became familiar with the works of Beccaria, Filangieri, Montesquieu, and Joseph de Maistre. A work which especially impressed me was the 'Soirées de Saint Pétersbourg' by the last named writer. Although I instinctively protested against the doctrine expounded by the author of the necessity of the effusion of human blood, the paradox impressed me. If capital punishment is justifiable, I used to argue, the most important functionary of social order should be the executioner. But, by a singular contrast, the more I became reconciled with the executioner the more I loathed capital punishment. I felt violent propensities of rebellion against society, whose prejudices soil with mud the basis of its edifice; and fits of indignation against the law by which society transgresses the rights of the Divinity. I erected a pedestal for the executioner, and I abominated execution. My life has been spent in such mental struggles.

My grandmother was the usual recipient of my impressions. I liked to converse with her on a subject which held so important a place in my meditations. She spoke on the subject with a freedom which enabled me to examine her arguments with more coolness than I could otherwise have shown. The temerity of her arguments was arrested by no feminine sensitiveness. Strangely enough, grandmothers in our family had the greatest influence over the destiny of grandsons, and the wife of Charles Henri Sanson was as much responsible for the perpetuation of our office as Martha Dubut

herself. She was clever, insinuating, and free-spoken; and she gained over me an ascendency which neither my father nor my mother possessed. She made me familiar with every paradox calculated to drive away my instinctive horror for my future profession.

I said, I believe, that I acquired a taste for the theatre. The tragedy was then in favour. Talma, Mdlle. Georges, and Mdlle. Duchesnois formed such a trio as has rarely been equalled. My liking for the play increased so that I went there almost every night. There was then a rivalry between Mdlle. Duchesnois and Mdlle. Georges; I became one of the ardent partisans of the latter. Mérope and Sémiramis enchanted me when they appeared before me under the features of Georges. Unfortunately the literature of the time was not at the height of such artists as Talma, Georges, Duchesnois, and Mars. On my return home I was only too glad to confide my impressions to my mother. We even talked of the theatre at table, and my father often joined in the conversation. I was surprised to find that he was as well acquainted with the daily occurrences of the stage as I was. Once I could not help saying:

'Father, I am sure you go to the theatre yourself.'

'Why shouldn't I, Henri?' he answered, smiling. 'I am not so religious as these ladies,' he added, pointing to my mother and grandmother, who never went to the play.

'Why shouldn't we go together?' I exclaimed; 'we should enjoy ourselves far more.'

My father turned grave, and said:

'No, Henri; we had better go separately. This does not prevent us from talking about plays, but I had rather you should go alone, and not be seen in my company.'

I was much moved. It was obvious that my father was afraid of casting odium upon me before my time. His prudence was extreme; we never went out together. Whenever we were compelled to go in each other's company he ordered his carriage, and no one could see us behind the blinds.

This quiet existence was interrupted by a sad event. On October 24, 1817, one of the chambermaids found my grandmother dead in her bed. She was in her eighty-fourth year. My father was much grieved at this loss. I also grieved over the loss of my grandmother, whom I had learnt to love. During mourning time I was of course obliged to give up the amusements I used to indulge in. This gave me a pretext for carrying out a plan I had made a long time before. My readings had inspired me with a wish to see Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and Holland. My mother did not encourage me, as she was loath to separate from me, but my father readily gave his consent. 'You are quite right, Henri,' he said; 'nothing instructs so much as travelling. Go, and a pleasant journey to you!'

I left Paris two days after. Means of locomotion were, of course, far more primitive then than they are now. However, I successively visited in a comparatively short time Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and Holland. I saw Rome, Naples, and Venice, and I was immensely

impressed by the artistic and natural beauties which passed before me. I did not remain long in Switzerland, but I remained for nearly six months on the banks of the Rhine. What struck me the most during the whole of my voyage was, I must confess, Amsterdam. My roving life was charming; and I was quite taken aback when I found that it had lasted over a year. It was with regret that, out of deference to my mother's wish, I turned again homeward and made for Paris.

The reader may perhaps be astonished at the easy and almost brilliant fashion of living of a family of executioners; but then it should not be forgotten that my father's fortune, not to speak of his emoluments, amounted to nearly 20,000*l.*, and that I was his only child.

A year after my return, I remarked, in the restricted circle of our acquaintances, a young girl, whose eyes were often fixed upon me with a singular expression. I fancied she talked about me to my mother; and mere curiosity at first induced me to remain at home more frequently than was my wont. The young person used to come with her family; I made her acquaintance, and I soon perceived that I was in love with her. This passion developed itself so rapidly, that I spoke about it to the young lady, and asked her permission to seek her hand—a permission which was duly given. I had the courage to acquaint her with the eventualities of the future. I frankly explained my position, and did not conceal from her the obligation under which I laboured of being my father's successor. One can imagine my agreeable surprise when I heard her approve of my in-

tentions, and encourage me to persevere in them. So much courage and, I may say, love on the part of so young a girl increased my affection for her, and I resolved to marry her as soon as possible.

On the following day I went to my father's closet, and asked the favour of a conversation. He was rather surprised, for I had hitherto shunned solemn parleys with him. 'Father,' I began, 'I am the bearer of good news. I know that in spite of your desire to see me follow in your steps, you would not for a moment compel me to do so. I have thought the matter over for the last two years, and I have now to express my resolve to select no other profession than yours.'

My father did not reply, but I saw that he was deeply moved. He took me in his arms and embraced me.

'And now,' I continued, 'I have to speak of something else. You told me once that whenever I should feel inclined to marry you would not interfere with my wish. I love Miss ——, and she has been good enough to say that my affection is reciprocated. I came to request you, father, to ask her hand in my name.'

At this my father expressed great satisfaction. Not only did he promise to do as I wished, but he said that previously he and my mother hoped that a match might eventually be arranged, and he was very glad to find that their wishes were fulfilled.

On the evening of the same day my father discharged his promise. Miss ——'s father slightly hesitated on account of our extreme youth (our ages, put

together, but just amounted to five-and-thirty years), but we had no difficulty in overcoming his scruples.

A month after, our marriage was celebrated at Saint-Laurent Church; and my young wife and I took possession of a cosy apartment in my father's house, which my mother had furnished and prepared for us.

The recollections of my youth end here. They conclude, like novels, by a marriage. It is no fault of mine if my story is not as stirring as fiction. It has at least the advantage of being true.

CHAPTER XLIX.

MY FIRST EXECUTION.

THE first year of my marriage was calm and peaceable. I had every reason to be happy. Thanks to the cares of my good mother, we had very little to think of beyond our pleasures and comforts. My young wife was as cheerful and kind as she was pretty, and our union promised to be one of undisturbed harmony.

My father made no allusion to my promise to take his office; but that promise was constantly in my mind; it was the only thought that clouded my happiness. Sometimes I looked with sadness at my young partner, thinking that a time should come for her to assume in her turn the title of Madame de Paris. The fulfilment of my pledge was even nearer at hand than I expected. My father was taken ill in the middle of the winter of 1819, and he was laid up for two months. His constant preoccupation during his illness was a sentence of death passed by the assize court of the Seine on a soldier of the Royal Guard, Pierre Charles Rodolphe Foulard, who had murdered two unfortunate women, to steal a watch and a pair of earrings. Foulard was barely twenty years

of age, but his crime was so atrocious that there was no hope of a reprieve for him. Foulard's case, however, had still to pass before the Court of Revision; but my father felt that his health would not permit him to superintend the execution. He was thinking of appealing to one of his provincial colleagues. This was rather awkward, as it was well known that I was to be my father's successor, and the judicial authorities might well inquire why I did not act as his substitute. Since my marriage I had made a point of following my father in the few executions that had occurred, but I had taken no active part in them. I may add that my father's part was hardly more active than mine; he had said the truth when he told me that almost everything was done by the assistants, and that the executioner only superintended what his servants did.

The time came for Foulard's execution; it came sooner than my father expected, so that he was unable to secure some one else's services. He was much better, but certainly not well enough to resume his duties; and my conscience smote me when he expressed his determination to risk his health, perhaps his life, and execute Foulard. I said to myself that, since I must begin, I had better begin at once, and I proposed to my father to take his place.

He gladly acquiesced, and gave me all the necessary instructions; he also pointed out two assistants on whose zeal I could especially rely; and finally I was assured that my attendance at the execution was little more than a formality. The assistants entered my father's

room just as I was leaving it, and he made them a short speech in which he urged them to afford me their best help and protection.

I was very nervous and frightened; nevertheless, I strictly acted upon the instructions furnished to me, and I gave the necessary directions to the carpenters. As night came on, my discomfort increased. I could scarcely eat any dinner. Fortunately my father was in his room, otherwise he might have insisted on doing the work himself. My mother and my wife were as uneasy as I was, but they abstained from making any observation on the matter. After dinner I retired to my room, and passed one of the worst nights of my life. When I got up next morning I was feverish and tired. The assistants were waiting for me in the courtyard. My father had ordered out his carriage for me, and with my new servants I silently proceeded to the Conciergerie. The horses went slowly enough, yet the journey seemed to me fearfully short.

It was yet dark when we entered that dismal prison. My assistants followed me at a short distance. I thought I saw an expression of disdain on the faces of the turnkeys and prison officials. I was in no humour to brook the contempt of men whose position, after all, did not much differ from mine. I assumed a sharp and imperative tone calculated to make them understand that I was not to be imposed upon, and ordered the head gaoler to hand us over the culprit. He led us into a low-ceilinged hall, where Foulard shortly after appeared, accompanied by the worthy Abbé Montés, a priest whose friendship I

afterwards acquired. Foulard's consternation struck me. The unfortunate boy was under age; had his father left him the smallest sum of money he could not have touched it; nevertheless he was considered responsible. This appeared to me iniquitous, the more so as I was only a year older than he. Foulard was a tall and handsome fellow, and his face betrayed no signs of the perversity he had shown in the perpetration of his horrible deed.

Fauconnier, my chief assistant, saw I was flurried; he came forward and told Foulard to sit down. When the young man's hair was cut, we got into the cart: the Abbé Montés and Foulard were behind us, and I stood in front with my two assistants.[1] The almoner of the Conciergerie doubtless perceived that I required encouragement and support as well as the man whose life I was going to take, for he spoke to me with much kindness: 'I see, sir, that you are now attending to your father's duties. Such missions as yours demand no small amount of courage. We are invested with duties which in some degree are akin: you represent the justice of men, I represent the mercy of God. You may be assured of my good disposition towards you, and of my readiness to assist you whenever it is in my power.'

I could not find a single word to answer, although I felt intensely grateful to the Abbé Montés for his kindness. Foulard was taciturn, but when we reached the

[1] Until then my father and grandfather had occupied a back seat beside the priest, and assigned a front place to the culprit. I was the first to alter this custom. My object was to leave the culprit with his last friend, the priest. I hope this does not appear childish. I acted with the best intention, and I believe I acted rightly.

quay he became very excited, and cried out in a loud voice:

'Fathers and mothers! behold the consequences of neglect of one's children! I am guilty, but my parents are responsible for my crime, for they gave me neither advice nor education.'

We reached the Place de Grève. The guillotine raised her two red arms, and the pale rays of a winter sun were reflected by the polished steel of the knife. A great many people were looking on. Foulard embraced the priest, and looked round before ascending the steps. In the first rank of the soldiers who surrounded the guillotine he saw a sergeant of his company. 'Come to me, my old comrade,' he cried to him, 'and let me bid you farewell.' The old soldier did not hesitate; he came forward and embraced the dying man. Foulard was very excited. He suddenly turned to me: 'Let me embrace you too,' he said, 'if only to show that I forgive everybody.' This, I confess, gave me a fearful blow. I stepped back. I really think that if the unfortunate man had embraced me I could not have given the signal for his death.

But even in this I am mistaken; this signal I did not give. My assistants saw my movement of retreat and understood the peril. They pushed Foulard up the steps. In less time than I take to write it he was strapped down and his head fell. I looked stupidly at the bloody scene. I saw one of the assistants pushing the headless trunk into a basket, while another was sponging the blood which had spurted on the scaffold.

I was seized with irresistible terror, and I ran away as fast as my legs could carry me. I wandered about town hardly knowing what I was about. I thought people were following and hooting me. It was only when I found myself at Neuilly that I recovered, and even then my conscience smote me bitterly. At last I made up my mind. I had crossed the line, there was no help for it; I had, as it were, passed my examination of executioner, and I could not return on my steps. I went home subdued, if not comforted, and I found some relief in the thought that the first step was made, and the first bitterness had passed.

CHAPTER L.

LOUVEL.

IT is erroneous to say that the first step is everything, but it is certainly that which is the most trying. I never got rid of my natural disgust for my profession, but my emotions were far less intense after my first execution. From that time I regularly replaced my father, or I accompanied him whenever he appeared on the scaffold. In the course of the same year (1819) we had to go twice to Beauvais; the first time for the execution of a parricide named Moroy, the second time for that of a murderer called Liebe.

On May 13 of the following year the guillotine was again erected on the Place de Grève for a young man of twenty-two, Charles Normand, condemned to death for having murdered Captain Sion, his master.

Few people were seen on the Grève on the day of execution. Paris, the whole of France, were engrossed by another drama, of which the *dénoûement* was also to come off on the Place de Grève. Three months before, the heir of the elder branch of the Bourbon family, the Duke de Berri, had been murdered. The assassin was

arrested immediately; he said his name was Pierre Louvel, he was a saddler by trade. Louvel confessed that his object in murdering the last scion of an illustrious family was political; he wanted, he said, to extinguish the race of the Bourbons for ever. Fate went against him, for six months after the Duchess de Berri was delivered of a child who was to be the Comte de Chambord.

Louvel was an enthusiastic republican. His life was pure and honest, but he was a fanatic, and for several years he brooded over his intended crime. It was soon discovered that he had no accomplices, and his trial was proceeded with. Louvel received with haughtiness his advocates, MM. Archambault and Bonnet; he requested them to say nothing that might be in contradiction with his previous declarations. He had committed his crime alone, he said, and he had been prompted by patriotism. He felt no regret; he even intended, had he escaped, to murder the other members of the royal family. 'I might, perhaps, have spared the King,' he added, 'because he was the only member of the family who had not fought against France.'

The trial began on June 5, before the House of Peers. It only lasted two days. Several peers, MM. Desize, De Lally-Tollendal, and De Montmorency, questioned Louvel closely, but no other facts than those he had already given were elicited. The issue of the trial could not be doubtful; before sentence was passed, however, Louvel rose and read the following statement:

'I have now to answer for a crime which I com-

mitted unaided. In dying I am consoled by the thought that I have dishonoured neither my country nor my family. I can only be regarded as a Frenchman resolved to sacrifice himself in order to destroy, according to my system, a number of the men who took up arms against his country. But among the men who compose the Government there are some as guilty as I am ; they have described crimes as virtues. The worst governments in France have always punished traitors, and in striking the Duke de Berri I was discharging a sacred duty.

'According to my system, when the country is threatened from the outside, political parties should forget party-feeling and join hands against the common enemy. Those who do not act thus are guilty. In my opinion, if the Battle of Waterloo was so fatal to France, it was because Brussels and Ghent were full of Frenchmen who fomented treason in the ranks of our army.

'In my opinion, the death of Louis XVI. was necessary, because he betrayed, or wanted to betray, France into the hands of the enemy. The Bourbons are eternally tainted with treason, and they have no right to reign in France ; they deserve punishment, and I have been one of the instruments of national justice.'

After this declaration Louvel was taken back to the Conciergerie, and the House deliberated. Sentence of death was unanimously pronounced, and the clerk of the House was sent to communicate the sentence to Louvel. He received the news unabashed. 'So much the better,'

he said; 'I am very glad to die. A reprieve would cause me more pain than death itself.' He sternly refused the assistance of religion. 'I don't want to go to paradise,' said he, laughing; 'I might meet there the Duke d'Enghien, who fought against his country, and I could never agree with him.' The Abbé Montés, however, obtained admittance to his cell and endeavoured to soften his heart.[1]

As to us, last actors of all these dismal dramas, we received on June 6, in the evening, an order to take the culprit on the following morning and to behead him on the Place de Grève. In deference to this order, my father and I went to the Conciergerie on the 7th, accompanied by four assistants. We found there a second order, which deferred the execution until half-past five o'clock P.M. We therefore waited until that time, wondering at the cause of this delay. The scaffold had been, of course, erected on the Grève, and an immense crowd gathered around it.

At half-past five we went to Louvel's cell, but my father suddenly remarked that no clerk was present, and another quarter of an hour was lost in fetching one. At a quarter to six exactly we 'took possession' of Louvel; one of the assistants tied his hands, while another was

[1] Culprits—religious culprits, of course—have no doubt derived benefit and consolation from the advice of the Roman Catholic priest who invariably attended them to execution. But it may have been seen in the course of the above Memoirs that spiritual advisers forced their exhortations upon convicts of all kinds, whether religious or not, thereby adding another torment to that of impending death. This merciless tender of consolation to men who persistently refuse to hear it cannot but appear as cruel as it is disgusting.—N. ED.

cutting his hair and the collar of his shirt. Louvel, who was thirty-six years of age, was a middle-sized man; his forehead was high and bumpy, and his eyes were deep-set and fierce. His face, on the whole, was anything but prepossessing. When the 'toilette' was complete, he asked for his hat, alleging his baldness. We then started for the Grève. I cannot say why, but I had an idea that the execution would not take place; I thought that the royal family would take into consideration the dying wish of the Duke de Berri, who had asked for Louvel's pardon. Moreover, I always felt prompted to put off the hour of death, in order to give the victim every possible chance of escape. Louvel's only hope of salvation in the present circumstance, was to pretend that he had revelations to make; and I said to my father, loud enough for Louvel to hear:

'If he has accomplices he should say so now, as it is the only means of putting off the execution.'

The Abbé Montés heard this, and turning to the culprit:

'You hear, my friend,' said he; 'you had better speak out while there is time yet.'

Louvel drily replied: 'I have nothing to say.'

We reached the guillotine, and the culprit was about to ascend to the platform, when the Abbé Montés caught hold of his arm, and said, 'Kneel down, my son, and ask God's forgiveness for your crime.'

'Never, sir,' answered Louvel, haughtily; 'I do not regret what I have done, and I would do it again, if necessary.'

'But, my friend, you have but one last effort to make to go to heaven. Come, be humble——'

'I shall go to heaven, just as you will, if there is one. Leave me alone, pray; think of yourself, not of me.'

'My dear child, I beseech you,' insisted the abbé, think of the salvation of your soul; say that you repent.'

'Sir,' indignantly retorted Louvel, 'I have already done a good many things to please you; you are stepping beyond the bounds of your duty.'[1]

Hardly had Louvel said these words than he ascended the steps so rapidly that the assistants were obliged to hold him back. He took his place unaided on the fatal plank, and at six o'clock precisely Louvel's head fell into the basket.

We took the corpse to the cemetery of the Barrière du Maine, but we were afterwards ordered to dig it up and bury it in another spot. The secret of this new burial remained unknown to all, save to the executioner and his assistants, who, on this occasion only, acted as gravediggers.

[1] The highly improper discussion raised by the Abbé Montés at the foot of the scaffold confirms a preceding note.—N. ED.

CHAPTER LI.

MY EXECUTIONS.

ON December 6, 1820, the scaffold was again erected on the Place de Grève for a young man, Pierre Louis Martin, who had murdered his father. He was led to the scaffold with a black veil over his head, and, in accordance with the penalty edicted against parricides, his fist was cut off before he was beheaded. It was the first time I saw this kind of punishment. The same sentence was executed on July 21, 1821, on a man named Nicolas Boutillier, who had murdered his mother.

On August 11, in the same year, we were sent to Melun to execute one Joseph Gratureau.

A gentleman's blood was shed on the scaffold on October 19. The Viscount de Ruault, officer on half-pay, was sentenced to death for trying to murder General Dujon. He died with great courage.

Six days later it was the turn of a coachman, named Jacques Louis Houster, sentenced for the murder of his mistress.

On January 9, 1822, we executed another young man under age, Jules Louis Théophile Guichet, for the murder of a woman.

On April 2 following we went to Versailles and executed Pierre Roux, wine-merchant, and Jacques Antoine Lecourt, a working man, who had killed a man on the road to Essonne. Their object was theft.

On the 20th of the same month we had to go to Beauvais for a double execution; that of Louis Nicolas Mahon, upholsterer, and Charles Mancheron, labourer, convicted of having murdered a young man they hated. The execution took place at mid-day.

On July 27 following we went again in the department of Oise, but this time our halting-place was Compiègne. The whole department was in a state of terror in consequence of the large number of fires which were constantly taking place throughout the locality. The judicial authorities wished to make an example. A pork-butcher, named Louis Charlemagne Gosslin, was found guilty of having set fire to twenty-two houses in a single village. He was executed at twelve on the Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, at Compiègne; he showed great coolness, and to the last protested that he was innocent.

All provincial executions used to take place in the public square at mid-day in presence of large crowds. The custom of executing in the middle of the day was also being adopted in Paris. Things have altered since then; nowadays, one executes at dawn, before the prison gate; a mysterious veil is cast, as it were, over the proceedings, as if the law were ashamed of what it is doing.

I. *The four Sergeants of La Rochelle.*

On September 21 my father and I went to the Conciergerie on a very sad errand. This time we had not to deal with ordinary criminals prompted to crime by the vilest passions; our victims, in the present case, were four unfortunate young men, victims of political fanaticism and of the secret intrigues of a party which tried to sap the throne of the Bourbons during the whole of the Restoration. It is not within my province to give a history of *carbonarism*—of that secret association imported from Italy, which counted princes as well as artisans in its ranks. The society was composed of *ventas*, or small groups of conspirators, who acted upon directions from a superior council. Precautions were taken to render the discovery of the society as a whole almost impossible. A batch of well-known men, Lafayette, Dupont, Manuel, Voyer d'Argenson, Benjamin Constant, Foy, Laffitte, &c., not content with the agitation they fomented in public assemblies and in the press, put themselves at the head of an active permanent conspiracy, the first effects of which were to be fatal to their obscure accomplices.

The army had never been attached to the restored Bourbons; the conspirators endeavoured to spread disaffection among the soldiers. In one instance at least they were successful. A *venta* was formed in the 45th line regiment. In the 45th there was a young sergeant of exalted views, generous aspirations, and great per

sonal advantages, who had much influence over his companions. Bories (such was his name) was tall, handsome, and precociously eloquent; he was a man of no ordinary cast, and the *carbonari* pitched upon him as a highly useful recruit. Bories was only too disposed to enter into their views; he organised a *venta* in the 45th, and gave several of his comrades the dagger which was the symbol of the secret association.

In spite of the religious secrecy maintained by the conspirators of the 45th, they were soon regarded with suspicion. They were too young to conspire effectually; they did not sufficiently conceal their feelings, and this was enough to awaken the attention of their superiors. At the time of a foiled attempt of General Berton's at Saumur, Bories was already arrested, although he had given no signal of insurrection. But treason came in; Goupillon, one of the youngest plotters, revealed the secret of the *venta* to the colonel of the regiment, and on the same evening all those concerned in *carbonarism* were arrested.

Almost every one of them admitted their crime. Bories alone persisted in a system of flat denial. Promises no more than threats could induce him to speak out. All the accused were transferred to Paris. At the Conciergerie Bories resumed his leadership. He wished to take the responsibility of the whole affair and save his companions. Ardent as he was in his democratic faith, he was also desirous to prevent any discovery that might have proved damaging to his cause; he agreed with his friends that whatever might

occur they should in no way compromise the success of their cause. The prisoners acted upon this system of defence in the trial, which began on August 21, 1822.

Twenty-five persons were implicated. These were: Massias, captain; Bories, sergeant-major; Hénon, schoolmaster; Baradère, barrister; Gauran, surgeon; Rosé, clerk; Pommier, sergeant-major; Goubin, Raoulx, and Amis, sergeants; Goupillon, Bicheron, Labouré, Cochet, Castille, Lutron, Huc, Barlet, Perrion, Lefebvre, Thomas, Gautier, Lecoq, Dariotscy, and Demais, soldiers. The trial lasted a fortnight. The prisoners did as they had agreed; they denied the charges, and left Bories to bear the brunt of the danger. With admirable self-abnegation he admitted everything, and it was no fault of his if he was not the only victim. It was in vain that the counsel did their utmost to save some of their clients. The Procureur-Général was pitiless: 'No human eloquence,' he exclaimed, 'could save the life of Bories.' Before the close of the trial the President of the Court asked the prisoners if they had anything to say. Bories was the only one who answered. Faithful to his generous intention, he rose, and in a firm and grave voice he pronounced the following words:

'Gentlemen of the Jury: You have heard the indictment, the witnesses, and the debates of our trial; and after what you heard you were, no doubt, surprised when M. le Procureur said "that no human eloquence could save my life." He pointed me out as the leader. I accept the responsibility. Happy shall I be if my death can save my companions.'

These noble expressions did not produce the requisite effect. Bories, Pommier, Raoulx, and Goubin, the four sergeants of La Rochelle, were sentenced to death. Different penalties were inflicted upon the other prisoners. The four young men listened with perfect calmness to the sentence which forfeited their lives. Bories turned to his counsel, gave him a jewel, and asked him to hand it over to a person whose address he gave him. The secret of this message was only known later. During thirty years since the execution of Bories and his companions, I saw a woman who at first was young and then turned prematurely old, going every morning to the Mont Parnasse cemetery; she placed a flower on Bories' grave and then silently withdrew. The poor woman died a few years ago. She was Bories' sweetheart.

The four sergeants were transferred to Bicêtre. Three of them, Goubin, Raoulx, and Pommier, had appealed against the decision of the Court; but when they heard that Bories had refused to avail himself of this last chance of salvation, they followed his example and withdrew their appeal. An attempt was made by the party to which they belonged to bribe the governor of Bicêtre and enable the prisoners to escape; but the governor's uncle—an unworthy priest—betrayed the secret and thereby frustrated all other plans of the same kind.

On September 21 Bories and his companions were taken to the Conciergerie. They one and all declined the consolations of religion. When they entered the

room whence they were to be transferred to the guillotine, Bories spoke to his three friends: 'Dear comrades,' he said, 'our time is come; let us show that we were worthy of our cause. Forgive me for having led you to this miserable death. Our blood shall not flow without result. Long live liberty!'

The three sergeants rushed into his arms, repeating his cry with extraordinary enthusiasm. The toilet began; they all submitted to it with noble dignity. Raoulx, the youngest, was the most cheerful. 'Poor Raoulx!' said he, alluding to his short stature, 'what shall remain of you when your head is gone?' Our departure from the Conciergerie was appointed for four o'clock P.M.; we were still at the prison at five o'clock. During this long hour the Council of Ministers was deliberating on the question whether the convicts should be reprieved or not. King Louis XVIII., it was said, was in favour of clemency; Monsieur, his brother, and his friends were for execution, and the latter opinion prevailed. Vain efforts were made to obtain revelations from the four sergeants. They refused to answer, saying that they preferred death to dishonour.

At five o'clock we started for the Grève. There was a numerous gathering of soldiers and gendarmes, for the authorities apprehended an attempt to save the prisoners. At the foot of the scaffold the four young men again refused to listen to the exhortations of the ecclesiastic who was with them. Bories, being a Protestant, had more reasons than his friends to decline the services of a Catholic clergyman. They again embraced,

and then the youngest stepped forward and gave himself up to us. He advanced on the platform with an unfaltering step, and while he was being strapped to the plank he cried: '*Vive la liberté!*'

Goubin came next, and he displayed as much fortitude as Raoulx. He also cried in a clear and firm voice: '*Vive la liberté!*'

Pommier was the third victim; he uttered the same cry as his friends.

At last Bories' turn came. The sight of a treble execution had at last shaken the young sergeant's stoicism, and his eyes were full of tears; but he recovered his self-possession on reaching the platform, and looking at the crowd below he said:

'Brothers, if I am weeping, it is not for myself but for my poor friends who have just been killed before me. To-day you are silent; but a time shall come when you will repeat my last cry of "*Vive la liberté!*"'

He was pushed towards the plank, and his head fell into the basket. Eight years after a conquering people entered the Hôtel-de-Ville and overthrew the last of the Bourbons, to the dying cry of the four sergeants of La Rochelle.

II. *Castaing.*

It is the executioner's fate to fall from political victims to the most vulgar criminals, and *vice versâ*. Before passing to the year 1823 I have to mention two cases, not of execution, but of exhibition on the scaffold.

Firstly, that of Cognard, calling himself Count de Saint-Hélène; and secondly, that of General Jean Sarrasin. The history of the former is well known. He was an escaped convict, and had taken possession of the papers of the real Count de Saint-Hélène, who died in Spain under suspicious circumstances. Cognard happened to resemble the Count; he returned to France, passed himself off for the dead nobleman, was accepted as such, led a brilliant life, and rose to the highest military dignities, until he was identified by a fellow convict. Cognard was sentenced to hard labour for life, and to exhibition on the scaffold. The hardened ruffian suffered punishment with extreme cynicism, and died at Toulon sixteen years after his identification.

Sarrasin was no impostor; he was a real general. His crime was polygamy, for which he was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment and to exhibition during an hour. He had married three wives: one in Italy, another in England, and a third one in France.

My next execution occurred on May 21, 1823. The culprit was a German tailor of the name of Feldtmann, who had murdered his daughter. On July 18 following, my father and I executed at Montreuil an agricultural labourer, named Laizier, who had murdered his father-in-law.

On December 6 of the same year I had to take the life of one of those great criminals who might be called the lions of crime because they have the privilege of engrossing public attention; I allude to Edme-Samuel Castaing, physician, aged 27. Castaing poisoned two

of his intimate friends—two brothers named Ballet—after inducing them to bequeath their property to their friend and doctor. Castaing was sentenced to death on November 19, and a little more than a fortnight after I had to deal with him. My father was with me. When the culprit was brought before us we wondered how so black a soul could lie under so prepossessing an appearance. Castaing's face was soft and expressive; his features were strikingly handsome; and his blue eyes were void of any ferocious expression. When he saw us he shook a little, and appeared afraid that we should in any way hurt him, for he said: 'Pray do not harm me; you'll kill me ere long; until then it is of no use to make me suffer.' While his hair was being cut he exclaimed, alluding to his victims: 'Oh, my poor friends, what would you say if you saw me in this sad position? I would have given my life to save you, and I am charged with your death!' These words moved me; I was young and inexperienced, and it seemed to me impossible that a man could persist in a heinous falsehood in the face of death. I suppose he noticed the effect his words produced, for just as Fauconnier, our chief assistant, was proceeding to bind his hands, he turned to me and said: 'Bind my hands, sir, and do not draw the cords too tight.' I acquiesced, and he thanked me. On the way to the Grève he never ceased protesting that he was innocent. The Abbé Montés listened to him with anything but a convinced air, and he besought him to relieve his conscience and confess his guilt. The sight of the scaffold made Castaing

shudder; the sinister aspect of the guillotine obviously caused him more terror than the idea of death. His fortitude vanished, and our assistants had to carry him up to the platform. He fell on his knees, and stretching out his hands towards the Abbé Montés, he cried in a lamentable voice: 'Forgive me, father; I am guilty. Will God forgive me?' The priest blessed him, and made him kiss a crucifix. As for me, I was astounded. The suddenness of the man's confession almost overcame me. Henceforth I was more sceptical when culprits assured me of their innocence.

III. *Brochetti, Dagron, Papavoine, &c.*

On January 24, 1824, I led a mother and her son to the guillotine. A young working man of the name of Lecouffe murdered an old woman known by the name of Mother Jérome, with the purpose of appropriating her money. It was eventually discovered that the idea of this horrible deed belonged to the murderer's mother. Both were sentenced to death. Their journey from the Conciergerie to the Grève was one of the most disgusting I ever saw. Lecouffe spoke to his mother with extreme violence of language, and the woman answered in the same tone. They insulted each other to the last.

Three executions on April 20 of the same year Ochard, Renaud, and Delaporte were highwaymen who excelled in the art of waylaying stage-coaches, and killing the passengers if they refused to give up their money

The scene of their exploits was the Forest of Bondy, near Paris. They were executed at four o'clock in the afternoon, and died as fearlessly as if they had been innocent.

On May 22 the scaffold was again erected for the execution of an Italian, a native of Rome, named Antonio Brochetti. He was imprisoned at Bicêtre at the time of the murder, he having been previously sentenced to hard labour for life. He killed one of the turnkeys, with no other object than putting an end to his own life. Life in a prison or in the hulks seemed to him a much more severe punishment than death. His wish was fulfilled; he was condemned to death, and executed on the Place de Grève five days after, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

He went to the scaffold with eagerness. 'I would rather die a thousand times than go to the hulks!' he exclaimed several times. Since Brochetti's execution the severity displayed in French penitentiaries has increased; and his example has been followed by many.

After Brochetti I executed a gardener, Nicolas Robert Dagron. This man had poisoned his wife and his son. He was guillotined on July 1. Four o'clock was then the usual time for executions in Paris, as mid-day was the time appointed in the provinces. On the same evening we received the visit of a woman who claimed Dagron's body; I complied with her wish.

No other executions took place in Paris in the course of the year 1824; but I had to go to Beauvais on

August 14 to execute a young murderer of the name of Dupuis.

On February 26, in the following year (1825), I again went to Beauvais to put to death two men, François Morel and Jacques Couvreux, who had murdered a priest and his servant. As one may see, executions at Beauvais were frequent.

My next execution demands more circumstantial details than those I have just mentioned. It was on March 24, 1825, that I received an order to put to death on the following afternoon Louis Auguste Papavoine, cloth merchant, aged 41, who had been sentenced on the 26th of the preceding month by the assize court of the Seine for having murdered two children in the wood of Vincennes. Papavoine was one of the strangest men we ever had to deal with. He had, as it were, no conscience of his villany. He murdered two children, respectively aged 5 and 6, in open daylight and in presence of their mother, without the slightest motive for committing the crime. His case, I think, was one for doctors, not for judges. A long and minute investigation was made, but no connection whatever between the family of the victims and Papavoine could be discovered. When Papavoine appeared before the jury he at first tried to deny his crime, but soon after he made a full confession ; he was, however, unable to furnish a reason for the murder, but he said that at the time he was under the influence of fever and delirium.

This was a premature excuse for a jury of the period. In our days Papavoine could hardly have been sentenced,

but science was not then as advanced and liberal as it is now. The plea of insanity was, however, urged by Papavoine's counsel, M. Paillet. A slight acquaintance with Papavoine's family induced this eminent barrister to accept the task of defending the child-killer. He discharged it with an eloquence which should have secured a favourable verdict; but his theory appeared too novel to the jury; and although the same plea was successfully urged on many subsequent occasions, Papavoine was declared answerable and sentenced to death. The jurors believed in his ruse and hypocrisy, and they not only brought in a verdict of guilty, but declared the crime to have been committed with *premeditation*. It is difficult to understand how such premeditation could have existed, for it was proved that Papavoine had no knowledge of the persons he chanced to meet in the wood of Vincennes.

The culprit was unmoved by his sentence. 'I appeal to Divine justice,' were his only words.

Divine justice was, indeed, his only hope, for his appeal was dismissed, and his family vainly implored royal clemency. Papavoine was executed on March 25, at twenty-five minutes past four o'clock. He went to death in a state of indifference and apathy, seemingly unconscious of his fearful position. The Abbé Montés was the only man who could bespeak his attention. On the way he turned twice to me asking whether we had a long way to go; he was anxious to see the end as soon as possible. When we reached the scaffold he addressed the abbé in the following terms:

'I do not regret life,' he said; 'ill as I was, I found no pleasure in it. I do not even think of my poor old mother. What smites my conscience is the death of those poor little children I was unfortunate enough to slay.'

The Abbé Montés congratulated him on his good sentiments. Papavoine knelt at the foot of the scaffold, kissed the crucifix, and went up the steps supported by two assistants. While the weigh-plank on which he was strapped was being lowered, I distinctly heard him say the following words:

'My God, have mercy upon me!'

I touched my father's arm, and we waited until his last word to give the signal.

Opinions are still divided on Papavoine; some persist in regarding him as a type of bestial ferocity, while the majority agree in thinking that he was a maniac. It seems impossible that he could have deliberately killed for the mere pleasure of killing. Similar instances of the same kind of crime have occurred since, and juries have taken a merciful view of the case. On the whole I preferred executing Papavoine, to being a member of the jury who found him guilty.

IV. *Asselineau and Ulbach.*

After the execution of Papavoine we went to Versailles on May 17 following, for the execution of a young man of nineteen, Gilbert Prunier, native of Poissy, sentenced for murder and robbery. It took place on the

old market square at twelve o'clock. On October 28, of the same year, we executed on the same square and at the same hour, one François Mercier, sentenced to death for attempted murder. Our presence was required at Beauvais on November 5 for the execution of an agricultural labourer, who had attempted to murder his wife. This time the execution came off at half-past two. On December 21 we reappeared on the Grève to execute a man named Denis Plessis, who had poisoned one of his fellow-workmen.

I must beg the reader not to tire of this sad and dry list. I have promised a history of the scaffold, and I wish it to be as complete as possible.

In 1826 there was only one execution; it is true that two men perished at a time. Virgilio Malaguti and Gaetano Rata, Italians, were sentenced to death for the murder of a money-changer of the Palais Royal. They were respectively aged twenty-three and nineteen years. We executed them on the 26th.

We inaugurated the year 1827 by two executions at Versailles; Julien Chevreau, who had murdered on the high-road, was beheaded on February 16; Thérèse Desplaces, aged thirty-six, was sentenced to death for poisoning, and executed on March 13.

On the 21st of the following month we went to Provins (Seine-et-Marne), for a double execution. An agricultural labourer and his wife, Cyprien and Adelaide Ninonet, were neighbours of a rich widow of the name of Corpedanne, who lived with her daughter. Ninonet and his wife did not hesitate to murder these two women, in

the hope of stealing whatever property might be in the house. The murderers were not immediately apprehended ; they were not even suspected. Their crime was revealed in a way worth relating. One of the victims, Madame Corpedanne, was not dead. As she was recovering from a state of insensibility, she was horrified on discovering that the charge of her body (for she was thought to be dead) was given to Ninonet's wife. The unfortunate victim saw herself in the hands of her murderess ; she had the presence of mind to give no signs of life, and as soon as a third party arrived, she pointed to the woman and her husband as her assassins.

The Ninonets were executed at twelve o'clock on the Place Saint Ayeul, before the church which bears that name. The woman moaned piteously, but public indignation was so intense that she failed to excite any sympathy.

I have now to mention one of the executions that impressed me most in the course of my career. The culprit was an unfortunate young man, Jean-Baptiste Asselineau by name, native of the department of the Nièvre, who was executed on May 8, 1827, on the Place de Grève. He was barely twenty, and his face was one of the most intelligent and sympathetic I ever saw. Somehow or other he had got into bad habits, and then stepped into crime. From 1825 to 1826 he committed a considerable number of forgeries. From forgery to murder there is but a step ; Asselineau yielded to evil temptation and murdered a man he knew, Jean-Baptiste Brouet. He took possession of his victim's property, and

it was while attempting to pass off bills belonging to Brouet that he was apprehended.

The public was surprised at the precocious perversity of a boy whose criminal career had commenced at the age of seventeen and reached its climax three years after; and to me this perversity appeared still more wonderful when I saw Asselineau for the first time. He was calm and resigned when we took him at the Conciergerie. He expressed much grief, not on his own account, but because of the dishonour he had heaped upon his family. On the way to the Grève he showed unlimited repentance; and I was profoundly moved by the softness of his words and the evident sincerity of his anguish. He embraced the Abbé Montés and offered no resistance.

Ten days after we again erected the guillotine for one Alexandre Buisson, aged twenty-nine years, who had murdered and robbed. On July 18, at Versailles, we executed a native of Rambouillet, named Charles Christopher Hervé, sentenced for poisoning his daughter. On August 4 we likewise put to death Jean-Baptiste Emery, aged thirty-eight years, for attempting to poison one of his friends.

Here is another of the few murderers who are of a nature to inspire interest, if not sympathy. Honoré François Ulbach was the murderer of Aimée Millot, better known as the shepherdess of Ivry. This affair was so interesting that, like the Lesurques business, it has been dramatised and put on the stage. Ulbach was an orphan; he was employed by a wine-merchant of the Barrière Fontainebleau, and he was remarkable for his

zeal and good temper up to the time when he fell in love with a young girl called Aimée Millot, who was in the service of a lady in the neighbourhood. The girl used to take her mistress's goats to graze near the wine-merchant's shop. The young people got to know each other, and a mutual affection sprung up between them. This led Ulbach to neglect his duties so much that his master at first remonstrated, and then discharged him; in consequence of this the girl, on the advice of her mistress, told Ulbach that they must part. The unfortunate young man tried to change her mind, but perceiving that his arguments were fruitlessly urged, he drew a knife and stabbed her five times.

Ulbach was twenty years of age, and Aimée was nineteen. The poor girl died almost immediately. As to Ulbach he gave himself up to the police, seeking in expiation some consolation for a crime which he bitterly regretted.

Ulbach was arraigned before the assize court of the Seine; he did not even take the trouble to defend himself. After a trial of a few hours he was sentenced to death. He heard the awful sentence without a word of regret, and when the president of the court informed him that he had a delay of three days to appeal against capital punishment, he coldly answered:

'I have no wish to appeal.'

Such was his intention, but his counsel and the Abbé Montés persuaded him not to persist in his purpose. His appeal, however, was rejected, and on September 10 he was given up to us. 'I do not regret life,' he said;

'I was only a poor orphan, and I have lost the only person I wanted to be my wife.' He seemed to listen with respect to the words of the priest; but his thoughts were not altogether divested of the feelings of this earth, for he said to the Abbé Montés: 'Yes, father, I am sorry I murdered my beloved, since I lost her for ever; but if I find her in heaven, do you think she will forgive me?'

The unfortunate man thought more of the forgiveness of his victim than of the judgment of the Almighty. Several witnesses said that Ulbach had had a foreboding of his death, for when he began to feel jealous he said on several occasions: 'I feel I shall die on the scaffold.' On another occasion, hearing a public crier who sold accounts of a recent execution, he observed: 'This is what shall soon be done for me,' and, imitating the crier's voice, he said: '"Buy for a penny the sentence of death and execution of Honoré François Ulbach."'

Ulbach's execution was the last that occurred in 1827. My services had been required eight times during the year. Our office was not a sinecure.

V. *Contrafatto, Robert Saint-Clair, and Benoit.*

It was at the beginning of the year 1828 that the exhibition of the Abbé Joseph Contrafatto took place. This priest, who was born at Piazza, in Sicily, was sentenced by the assize court of Paris to hard labour for life, and to exhibition during an hour, after being marked on the right shoulder with the letters T F. His crime

can hardly be described: he had committed a criminal attempt upon a little girl.

I am bound to say that the Abbé Contrafatto's attitude was full of Christian humility. The crowd insulted and hooted him; as long as the exhibition lasted he did not give the slightest sign of impatience. His countenance was undoubtedly that of an innocent man. Singularly enough, he found a devoted friend in the person of M. Charles Ledru, son of a friend of Lesurques, who, as counsel in the civil suit, had contributed more than anybody else to his conviction. M. Ledru gave his close attention to the affair, and soon became convinced that Contrafatto was innocent. He spared no pains to allay the misfortune for which, in his own opinion, he was partly responsible. Contrafatto's punishment was gradually softened, and at length, after remaining in the hulks for seventeen years, the abbé recovered his liberty. His generous saviour was no small loser in consequence of his efforts to obtain Contrafatto's freedom; he made certain declarations which were considered more than imprudent by his colleagues, who took upon themselves to disbar him. Of course the question whether Contrafatto was guilty or not still remains open, but there is every reason to believe in his innocence.

Five months after Contrafatto's exhibition we returned to the more cruel necessities of our functions. We had to execute a man of the name of Nicolas Roch, who had been sentenced to death for murder on the high road. On October 28 in the same year I executed two women at Versailles; one had murdered her husband,

the other her mother. The latter, according to the law of the time, was to suffer the amputation of the fist before execution. For this complication of capital punishment, my father had invented a contrivance by which the fist was so compressed that the pain was considerably diminished. Catherine Darcy (the murderess in question), however, uttered fearful shrieks when her fist was cut; her cries only subsided when the knife of the guillotine came down upon her neck.

On June 13, 1829, we returned to the Place de Grève, and executed a Belgian named Philippe François Debacker, who had murdered his mistress and another woman. Thirteen days after we went again to Versailles, where we executed François Blondé, carrier, for murder. On August 5, Pierre Augustin Billau, pork butcher, was executed. This man's crime produced great sensation in Paris: he attempted to murder his wife with a devilish display of cruelty. The market women of La Halle hooted him on his way to the Grève. On January 27, 1830, I executed Jean-Baptiste Guérin, Jean Louis Bardon, and Louis Chandelet, condemned for murder and theft. Then came André Lepauvre, sentenced for the murder of his uncle (Feb. 9); Eugène Poteau, for attempted murder (Feb. 26); Jean Pierre Martin, for murder in the Bois de Boulogne (July 22). This was the last head that fell under the Restoration—the last also that fell on the Place de Grève. A revolution swept away the old monarchy, and placed on the throne the son of a man executed by my grandfather, the Duke d'Orléans, better known as Philippe Égalité. One of the effects of

the revolution was the transfer of the guillotine to the Barrière Saint-Jacques.

No execution took place in Paris throughout the year 1831. It was otherwise in other parts of my jurisdiction. The first of the year occurred at Versailles, and the culprit was an accomplice of a man named Daumas-Dupin, who had robbed and murdered one M. Prudhomme and his wife. Robert Saint-Clair, such was the criminal's name, was an escaped convict. He had sought shelter in Switzerland, where he was apprehended and handed over to the French authorities. His arrest was attended with rather curious circumstances. Robert Saint-Clair was dining at a *table d'hôte* opposite a distinguished writer who gave a great deal of attention to phrenology and physiognomy—sciences which were then in fashion. The writer in question was a very amiable and amusing *causeur*, and he entertained those who were at table by the novelty of his observations. Robert Saint-Clair alone was incredulous, and little disposed to like a science which enabled the adept to discover the secret instincts and leanings of other persons from a mere scrutiny of their features. He shrugged his shoulders, and even expressed in an uncivil way his disgust for the theories of the speaker. The latter, on his side, began to observe the dissenter; he seemed struck by some idea suggested by his scrutiny, and suddenly addressing Saint-Clair:

'You seem to doubt the truth of what I say,' said he; 'will you allow me to give you a proof of what I said by telling you what your features indicate?'

'Very well,' answered Saint-Clair, though not without hesitation.

'They show the cunning of the fox and the ferocity of the wolf.'

The remark was anything but flattering. Saint-Clair started, and as he had passed himself off as an officer it was at first feared that he would challenge the bold physiognomist. But nothing of the kind occurred; Saint-Clair did not move, and remained silent until the end of the dinner. He was rising with the others when a number of gendarmes entered the room and asked the travellers to exhibit their passports. Saint-Clair showed his, and although it was quite *en règle*, he was identified, arrested on the spot, and shortly after sent back to France. I may add that he died with courage.

It was only on February 3, 1832, after an interruption of eighteen months, that the guillotine was again required. It was erected, not on the Place de Grève, but on the cross road of the Barrière Saint-Jacques. The execution took place in the morning at nine o'clock, and the culprit was brought straight from Bicêtre in a covered carriage. The hideous cart had seen its time.

On July 13, 1832, I had to put to death a very young although very great criminal, whose deeds had created much sensation: Nicolas Théodore Frédéric Benoît, son of a highly respected justice of the peace in the Ardennes, who suffered in atonement of two murders, the second of which had been perpetrated in order to conceal the first deed.

Young Benoît began by murdering his mother, after

stealing from her bedroom a bag which contained 4,000 francs. The crime was so horrible that no one thought of suspecting the real murderer, who was only nineteen, and had received an excellent education. A neighbour of M. Benoît's, who had a grudge against him, was suspected, arrested, and tried. He was acquitted by a bare majority, and but just escaped the scaffold. Meanwhile Frédéric was sent to Nancy, and then to Paris, where he began to study law. But the young murderer plunged into a life of dissipation and vice, and an unworthy fellow of the name of Formage became his boon companion. Their intimacy was such that Frédéric Benoît told Formage of his previous crime. Formage was not much better than Benoît, for, instead of separating from him, he continued on intimate terms with him, until his return home. He then wrote to him, asking for money, and threatening to reveal his secret if he refused to send him the requisite sum. Benoît was quite equal to the situation: he returned to Paris, cajoled his companion, and one afternoon he murdered him in an hotel at Versailles.

What he regarded as the guarantee of his safety was the cause of his death. Benoît had been seen in Paris on the eve of the crime, and at Versailles in Formage's company; and although he had managed to escape from the hotel after the murder, he was apprehended and charged. An investigation led to the discovery of a copy of the letter in which Formage threatened to inform against him, and thus the cause of his crime became known.

Benoît stoutly denied the overwhelming charges brought against him; he displayed throughout his defence no ordinary ability, but he had to deal with a formidable opponent. The inhabitant of Vougiers who had been tried by mistake took up the civil prosecution, and entrusted M. Chaix d'Est-Ange, the celebrated barrister, with the task of showing his innocence. M. Chaix joined the public prosecutor in his denunciation of the prisoner, and Benoît was sentenced to the death of parricides; that is, with bare feet, a shirt as his only garment, and a black veil over his head.

When we reached the prison of Bicêtre, where the unhappy young man was incarcerated, we heard his cries through the walls of the cell when he was informed that death was at hand. He appeared in the hall, where we were waiting for him, supported by two warders. This was the first time I beheld such weakness before death. He said nothing while my assistants were cutting his hair, but when they undressed him he uttered frightful shrieks. The only words of his I could understand were 'Mercy!' 'Pity!' 'I am innocent!' 'Do not kill me!' He tried to rise, but could not. The black veil was spread over his head, and we started for the guillotine. Benoît fainted several times on the way. Whenever he recovered he exclaimed in a piteous tone: 'M. Chaix d'Est-Ange has caused my death. My poor mother, you know I am innocent!' The priest who supported him did not spare his encouragements, but Benoît still persisted in saying he was innocent. It was only when he saw the guillotine that he knelt and confessed his

guilt. This confession I distinctly heard, although it was only intended for the ears of the priest, and I was relieved when it came out, for I had followed the trial, and in my humble judgment Benoît had been convicted on proofs which appeared to me anything but conclusive.

Benoît was carried up to the platform, for he could not be induced to walk. He was insensible while my assistants strapped him to the weigh-plank.

On retiring, my father (who usually accompanied me on such occasions) said to me that, since the execution of Madame Dubarry, he had never seen an instance of such weakness on the scaffold.

'Remark,' he added, 'the powerlessness of capital punishment; we have just executed a man who had the greatest fear of death. Well, the man was not twenty-one, and yet he had already committed two murders. Fear of capital punishment did not deter him.'

I was quite of his opinion. My father shrugged his shoulders, and continued: 'Fear of death is a physical sentiment which is linked with the instinct of conservation. When a man is ill, or in great peril, then he fears death, but never is he deterred by the prospect of distant death; and if the man be a ruffian the temptation of crime will get the better of whatever lurking apprehension he may have.'

VI. *Lacenaire, Fieschi, and Alibaud.*

Few executions took place in 1833, and 1834 was one of happy inaction. It was only on July 11, 1835,

that we received an order to put to death one Jean Laborde, an agricultural labourer sentenced for murder; he was executed at Melun. On October 24 a soldier named Roch Bélard, who had murdered one of his friends, passed through our hands; and two celebrated criminals, Lacenaire and Avril, were executed at the beginning of 1836.

Lacenaire especially deserved the name of 'lion of crime' which I ventured to give to Castaing. Never before did a murderer engross public attention to such a degree; never before was a criminal beheld with more curiosity—I will even say with more enthusiasm. The object of Lacenaire and his accomplice was theft, and the means murder. To murder and rob the commissionnaire of a bank in charge of bank-notes, was the chimera which he pursued with incredible pertinacity. He was not successful; and several fruitless attempts betrayed Lacenaire and his accomplices into the hands of the police.

Lacenaire displayed the most extraordinary cynicism and audacity. Instead of confessing that he was led to commit his crimes by his evil passions, he endeavoured to explain them by his principles; and he expressed doctrines which were alike antagonistic with morality and good sense. Gifted with eminent faculties, he clothed his shameless sophisms in brilliant language; and he was listened to with indulgence; his prose, his verses, were read with avidity, and he became the hero of the day. This, I think, was a mistake. Lacenaire made a pedestal of the scaffold, and died with

the consoling consciousness that he was a celebrated man.

Lacenaire and Avril, his accomplice—or rather one of his accomplices—was sentenced to death on November 15. Both appealed against the sentence; but the former declared that he only did so 'in order to have time to write his memoirs.' Lacenaire's expectations were frustrated; he could not conclude his scandalous biography; but a well-known writer undertook the task after Lacenaire's death, and the work was published.

The reader, if he likes, can find in the 'Causes Célèbres,' by M. Fouquier, an account of Lacenaire's last acts. There is no need, therefore, for me to give further details than those of my personal contact with this famous murderer. When we arrived at Bicêtre, he came to us gracefully, and smoked a cigar while his hair was being cut. Avril showed no less coolness. The morning was raw and cold; he could not help shivering. 'It's awfully cold,' he said; 'they'll think I am afraid.' He asked for a glass of brandy, which was handed to him by a warder. 'Thanks, old fellow,' said Avril, drinking it off. He then bade farewell to the turnkeys, while Lacenaire was bowing ceremoniously. The journey to the guillotine was a long one, for the roads were muddy, and the carriage advanced with some difficulty. Abbé Montés made a final effort to touch the heart of Lacenaire, but the man's scepticism was too much for him. It was nearly half-past eight o'clock when we arrived. The culprits alighted first, and we followed them. Avril, whose execution was to take place first, embraced the priest,

who escorted him to the foot of the scaffold. He turned to Lacenaire, and cried in a strong voice:

'Farewell, Lacenaire; farewell, my mate!'

A smile appeared on the lips of the other culprit. The thump of the knife did not even make him start. In his turn he firmly went up the steps of the guillotine, and looked intently at the crowd. We thought he was about to speak; but he held his tongue, and stretched out of his own accord on the plank, which was still dripping with Avril's blood. The knife came down, and Lacenaire's head fell into the basket. Some newspapers of the period pretended that there was an interval of twenty seconds, and that the knife stopped before it reached Lacenaire's neck. This was altogether untrue. This detail was probably invented for the sake of effect. No extraordinary event occurred while Lacenaire was being guillotined. I tried to contradict the report of the above invention, but no paper would print my letter. All I can say is that the famous criminal was remarkably cool and resolute, and that he suffered no more than Avril. My account, I know, differs from the official one, but I venture to assert that mine is correct.

Four weeks later the guillotine was again at work; the criminals were Fieschi, Morey, and Pépin, who had attempted to murder King Louis Philippe on July 28. Fieschi's attempt is well known: he invented an infernal machine, which he discharged as the King and his family were passing. None of the royal personages were wounded, but forty persons fell under Fieschi's bullets;

among others a marshal of France, several generals, and other men of distinction.

Fieschi was arrested. He was found to be an adventurer of a low kind; he had been a spy, and had become a political murderer out of interest. He tendered his services to a few fanatics, who were foolish enough to accept them. Fieschi began by naming them. These accomplices were no higher persons than a saddler of the Rue Saint-Victor, and a grocer of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Fieschi's cowardice forfeited the lives of these two men, whose participation in his crime was not so great as the chief criminal made it out to be. Morey, the saddler, and Pépin, the grocer, were sentenced to death, while another accomplice was condemned to imprisonment for twenty years.

Morey was a withered old man, but he had a proud heart, and he died with much dignity. Pépin was not forty years of age, and had four young children; he also was brave to the last. As to Fieschi, he fainted away while my assistants were strapping him.

On July 11 of the same year, we had to execute another regicide. Alibaud—such was his name—was far superior to Fieschi. He was twenty-six years of age, had been in the army, and was known as an honest and honourable man. He waited for the King's carriage at the corner of the Carrousal, and fired at the prince. Louis Philippe again escaped unhurt. Alibaud was led to the scaffold with a black veil over his head. He advanced to the side of the scaffold, and said: 'I

die for liberty and the extinction of infamous monarchy.' He died without fear or bravado.

VII. *Darmès, Béliard, Salmon, Poulmann, Pont, &c.*

There was no execution in Paris during the year 1839. The scaffold was only erected on February 29, 1840, for a common and not particularly interesting criminal. Only two more instances of capital punishment occurred in 1840, and our first execution in 1841 was on the person of one Marius Darmès, sentenced for firing a gun at King Louis Philippe. Darmès was a man of the same category as Alibaud, and he showed indomitable energy during the whole of his trial before the House of Peers. This was the third attempt on the King's life.

No executions in 1842.[1]

On November 6, 1843, at Versailles, execution of Clovis Joseph Béliard, condemned to death for murder. On November 30 of the same year, execution of Henri Salmon for murdering a man named Sèchepine in the wood of Vincennes. For some time past I had merely appeared on the scaffold, and I left the irksome duties of fetching the culprits, &c., to Piot, my first assistant. To my great surprise Piot came to me saying that Henri Salmon wished me to superintend the toilet in person. I of course gratified this wish. When I asked Salmon why he wished me to attend him rather than any other,

[1] A few unimportant executions are omitted in the present version of Sanson's Memoirs.

he said that he knew my family, and hoped that I would spare him as much as I could. I was touched, and did him all the good turns I could on the way to the guillotine.

The successor of Salmon on the guillotine was the notorious Poulmann, alias Durand, alias Legrand, whose hideous celebrity was almost equal to Lacenaire's. Poulmann was very intelligent; and if he did make a principle of murder and robbery, he at least possessed greater physical powers than Lacenaire. He was sentenced to death on January 27, 1844, for the murder of an old man who kept a wine-shop near Nangis. When the hour of punishment came he showed the most extraordinary courage. He was a confirmed materialist, and firmly believed in nihilism. Poulmann was particularly proud of his personal strength; and as it was feared that he would try and make a show of it before dying, I was requested to double the number of my assistants. These apprehensions were groundless. When my assistants advanced to bind his hands, Poulmann looked up angrily and asked whether it was the custom; 'because if it is not,' he added, 'I'll send you all tumbling over in less than a minute.' He, however, submitted. He would not allow the Abbé Montés to accompany him. When we reached the scaffold Poulmann looked at it without a shudder. 'Is that all?' said he, shrugging his shoulders. On reaching the platform Poulmann turned towards the assistants and exclaimed: 'I say, you fellows, won't you put a franc piece in my pocket for the gravedigger? It is bitterly cold, and the poor fellow must drink my health.'

Such were his last words.

On October 28, 1844, at Versailles, execution of Antoine Pont, sentenced to death for having poisoned his wife and then murdered his mistress in the forest of Sénart. The atrocity of this double crime absorbed public attention, and the scaffold was surrounded by an immense crowd who hooted the culprit.

. . . . . .

And now I have done. My notes end here. My father died in 1841, and from the time of his death I became an inactive spectator of executions. I had executed over a hundred persons, and I felt it was enough for me. I remained *de nomine* executioner; Piot, my first assistant, was also my factotum, and I merely attended executions as a matter of form. In fact I retained my functions, but I had not the courage to discharge them. Long before my dismissal in 1847 I was expecting and hoping that the Government would fulfil my dearest wish and enable me to retire without breaking the promise I had made to my father of never withdrawing of my own accord. My dismissal did come at last, and while some fifty eager individuals were competing for the office of executioner I greeted it as a deliverance.

APPENDIX.

PUNISHMENTS NOT FOLLOWED BY DEATH.

DEGRADATION.

THE first category of punishments in force in France comprised *Degradation*, the *Pillory*, *Amende honorable*, *Flagellation*, and *Mutilation*. The first three of these penalties were rather moral than physical.

By *degradation*, the culprit was ignominiously stripped of the functions, privileges, and titles wherewith he was invested.

Officers of justice were publicly degraded. The execution of a sentence of death was always to be preceded by degradation. Thus, when Marshal de Biron was on the scaffold, the Chancellor of France deprived him of the insignia of the Order of the Holy Ghost.

The degradation of a nobleman was always attended with much solemnity. Thirty knights of proved courage met in council, and summoned to their presence the nobleman charged with felony. A king- or a herald-at-arms pronounced the accusation of treason, or broken faith, and if the charge was not well met, degradation took place in the following manner. Two scaffolds were erected in public: on one the judges were assembled, surrounded by heralds and men-at-arms; on the other stood the culprit, fully armed, with his shield stuck in a spike before him. He was then stripped of all his weapons,

beginning with the helmet; his shield was broken in three pieces; the king-at-arms poured a basin of hot water on his head, and priests sang the service of the dead during this impressive ceremony. The judges, clad in mourning, then went to church, whither the culprit was borne on a litter. After a *De Profundis* he was given up to the royal judge to be dealt with by High Justice. On some occasions he was allowed to outlive his infamy, as in the case of Captain Franget, a Gascon gentleman, who had treacherously surrendered Fontarobia to the Spaniards. He was degraded at Lyons in 1523, in the manner I have described, and afterwards set free.

Subsequently degradation was abandoned, because the sentence in itself was understood to imply the stigma. It was resumed in 1791 under the name of civil degradation. The clause was thus worded: 'The culprit shall be led to the public place, where sits the tribunal that passed sentence upon him. The clerk of the court shall address him in these words: "Your country has found you guilty of an infamous act; the law and the court strip you of your title of French citizen."'

Civil degradation is still in force, but it is not coupled with ceremony, and merely consists in the deprivation of certain rights mentioned in Article 34 of the Penal Code. However, according to martial law, no dishonourable sentence can be carried out without effective degradation.

PILLORY AND CARCAN.

Pillory succeeded carcan, which was adopted in 1719, and only disappeared a few years ago. The pillory was a kind of post or pillar to which, in token of infamy, criminals were chained. It was generally placed in a well-known spot. In Paris it was situated near the Halles. It consisted in an octagonal tower with a ground floor, and only one landing. The culprit was shown there during three consecutive market-

days. On each day he was taken round the pillory every half-hour, so that he should be seen on all sides. This species of exhibition differed according to towns; thus, at Orleans, where for the first time the pillory was used, it consisted in a wooden cage, six feet high, and only two feet and a half broad, in which the culprit was thrust, and obliged to remain in a standing posture. The cage revolved on a pivot, and the people had the right to turn it so as to see the prisoner on all sides, to hoot him, and to throw mud in his face.

The *Carcan* was rather an adjunct to the pillory than a new punishment. It was a circle, or iron collar, which the executioner riveted around the convict's neck. The convict was led forth on foot, both hands attached behind the executioner's cart, or tied behind his back. At the place designated for the punishment was a post, to which was linked a long chain, terminated by an iron collar six inches thick, which had a hinge. The neck of the convict was enclosed in this collar, which was then locked with a padlock. A placard indicating the crime of the culprit was sometimes stuck on his breast.

Crimes punishable by the pillory were bankruptcy, forgery, bigamy, fraud, cheating at cards, robbery of fruit, sale of prohibited books, and blasphemy. Under Francis I. and Henry II. this last crime was met by six hours of carcan. The application of carcan changed by dint of time, and when it disappeared from the French penal code it consisted in being attached in public by the neck to an iron collar for the space of an hour.

AMENDE HONORABLE, ETC.

In the long list of punishments inflicted in former days, *Amende honorable* held the last place. Perhaps this revolting punishment should have had a higher place, but it was intended to touch the mind, not the body. It was frequently a pre-

liminary step to a more severe punishment. The sole act of parading a prisoner in a cart through the streets was, however, a punishment inflicted upon petty thieves. In some cases it was also inflicted upon noblemen.

Among other moral inflictions should be mentioned the act, resorted to under the reign of St. Louis, of breaking a knight's spurs on a dunghill. In the middle ages a husband who suffered his wife to beat him was made to ride about the streets on a donkey with his head towards the tail. Cutting the table-cloth before whoever had committed an act of cowardice was another usage of the same kind. This was done to William of Hainaut, at the King of France's own table, because he had not avenged the murder of his grand-uncle.

FLAGELLATION.

Flagellation has been one of the most cruel and humiliating punishments. It was abolished in 1789, but continued in force in the navy, until the Provisional Government of 1848 finally suppressed it. Corporal punishment, however, is still in vigour in the hulks.

MUTILATIONS.

There is scarcely a single part of the body that has not been subjected to a separate and special torture: the eyes, mouth, tongue, ears, teeth, arms, hands, feet, and heart have been so many sources of suffering by fire and iron. Blindness, resorted to under the first two races of French kings, was inflicted by princes upon high personages whose attacks they feared, but whose lives they dared not take. Blindness was applied to Bernard, King of Italy, grandson of Charlemagne; and the Parliament of Senlis, in 873, ordered that the rebellious son of Charles the Bald should be deprived of his sight.

A red-hot iron passed before the eyes until, to use Joinville's expression, they were cooked; a steel point which was plunged in the centre of the organ; the plucking out from the socket—such were the instruments and means resorted to by justice and revenge, which in barbarous ages were often confounded.

The tongue has in all times been practised upon by the law. Louis IX., generally considered one of our wisest kings, ordered that blasphemers should be marked on the brow, that their lips should be burnt, and their tongue pierced with a red-hot iron. For this punishment he invented a round-shaped iron, which the executioner applied to the lips of the culprit, after heating it. Louis XII., the 'father of the people,' enacted that whoever uttered eight blasphemies should have his tongue torn out, and Louis XIV. re-established the law. The zeal of Francis I. for the triumph of the Catholic religion suggested new tortures, which were inflicted on the Protestants. Among the Huguenots burnt alive on January 21, 1535, in the presence of the King, was a man named Antoine Poile, whose tongue was pierced and attached to his cheek with an iron pin. The infliction usually took place before a church.

The amputation of the ear was a common punishment in the middle ages. It was practised on the serf who displeased his master. Two laws, one enacted in 1498, the other in 1534, alluded to this particular mutilation, which is also particularised as a punishment in the records of Anjou, Loudunais, La Marche, &c. Sauval gives the following account of it: 'The amputation of one ear was inflicted on dishonest servants, and cutpurses; a second offence cost them the other ear; death was the penalty of the third offence. When the first larceny was considerable it was the left ear which was cropped.'

The teeth also were within reach of the executioner. It was the wont to pull out the teeth of Jews to make them give up their money; and Louis XI., after the death of Jacques

d'Armagnac, Count de Nemours, ordered that his children should be taken to the Bastille, and that their teeth should be extracted.

The amputation of the fist is the form of mutilation which has the longest resisted the progress of civilisation. The Code of 1791, art. 4, enacted that 'whoever shall be condemned to death for murder or arson, shall be taken to the place of execution clad in a red shirt. A parricide shall have his head and face covered with a black cloth, which shall only be taken away before execution.' But the Code of 1810 returned to the old legislation, and decreed that the fist of a parricide should be amputated. It was only in 1832 that this useless cruelty was finally suppressed.

The amputation of the feet was a wholly mediæval punishment. The last instance of this cruel infliction was under the reign of St. Louis.

Another punishment which may be classed in the category of mutilations, was that which consisted in branding convicts with a red-hot iron. In older times, the culprit was branded with the *fleur-de-lys*. Afterwards, the letter V, impressed on the shoulder of thieves, was substituted, or the letters GAL (*galères*) when they were sent to the hulks. Soon after, the letters T F (*travaux forcés*) took the place of previous marks. This infliction was abolished by the law of April 28, 1832.

PUNISHMENTS FOLLOWED BY DEATH.

CAPITAL punishment has prevailed in all legislation in France, as almost everywhere else, and during a long period it was coupled with atrocious sufferings. And murder, or conspiracy against the State, were not the only crimes punished with death; among other crimes in which it was inflicted were pecuniary exactions committed by officers of the law, fraudulent

bankruptcy, forgery committed by State officials, peculation, false evidence, housebreaking and waylaying, smuggling, false marks on jewellery, the pettiest acts of theft, sacrilegious profanation, duelling, &c., &c. I may as well give a summary of the too numerous punishments entailing death which were in practice from ancient time to our days.

THE CROSS.

The Cross was the most ancient and cruel form of capital punishment. In France it was rarely resorted to. In 1127 Louis the Bulky ordered Bertholde, the murderer of Charles the Righteous, to be crucified. Crucifixion was also inflicted at different times on Jews and heretics.

DECAPITATION.

Decapitation is also a punishment as old as the world. It was particularly common under Richelieu's rule. The Cardinal struck hard at the nobility, and caused a greater number of noble heads to fall under the sword of the law than had been sacrificed since the first origin of the French monarchy. The advantage of this capital execution reposed in the executioner's dexterity, which, unfortunately, could only be acquired by practice. History and our family records contain frightful examples of awkwardness in decapitation by sword or axe. It is well known that De Thou's head only fell at the eleventh blow, and a similar event happened at the execution of Madame Tiquet.

HANGING.

Hanging was in force as well as decapitation. The latter was the exclusive privilege of the nobility, while the first

was inflicted upon culprits of lower station. In certain cases, however, the rope was awarded to noblemen also. The guillotine replaced the gibbet under the Revolution.

THE STAKE.

The *Stake* was another torture followed by death inflicted in France as late as the seventeenth century.

QUARTERING.

Quartering was another horrible form of death in former days. Damiens, who attempted the life of Louis XV. in 1757, was the last who perished by it. Quartering consisted in tying the convict by the arms and legs to four horses, which were then driven in different directions until the execution was consummated. Quartering was almost exclusively inflicted on regicides. Horrible in itself, it was prefaced by other tortures of ingenious cruelty.

THE WHEEL.

The *Wheel*, or rack, was as barbarous as any other form of capital punishment. It consisted in tying the culprit on a wheel, breaking his limbs, and leaving him on the wheel until he expired. But it often happened that the judges ordered, by a *retentum*, that he should be strangled before his limbs were broken. This punishment was most frequent in France, and many innocent men suffered by it, among others the unfortunate Calas. The wheel was abolished in 1789.

DROWNING.

At the origin of the Monarchy, sorcerers and witches were sentenced to be *drowned*. Philippe Auguste extended this

punishment to untitled persons who should swear. Charles VI. applied it to all those guilty of sedition. Louis XI. seems also to have sanctioned drowning in certain cases, but the punishment disappeared after his death.

FLAYING ALIVE.

Flaying alive was often resorted to in France. The chamberlain of the Count de Rouci was flayed alive in 1366 for betraying Laon into the hands of the English; and the Constable of Armagnac, when he was made prisoner, was subjected to the same death by his enemies.

LAPIDATION AND EMPALEMENT.

The only instance of *Lapidation and Empalement* in France occurred under Frédégonde.

ESTRAPADE.

Estrapade, invented under Francis I., consisted in letting the culprit fall from a height in such a manner as to break his limbs.

BOILING.

Another kind of punishment, applied to utterers of counterfeit coin, was *Boiling*, either in oil or water. This was abandoned in the seventeenth century, but it was regularly abolished only in 1791.

LA CALE.

La Cale, of which a mild form is retained in the French navy, consisted in hoisting the culprit to a considerable height,

and then letting him fall. In *cale sèche* he fell on deck; in *cale humide* he fell in the water.

Before alluding to the last and only form of capital punishment, it is worth noticing that the middle ages provided a supreme protection against death, even at the foot of the scaffold. The culprit might, if he succeeded in slipping through the hands of his keepers, seek refuge in a church, and his person was sacred so long as he abided there. The Church was very jealous of this privilege of holy sanctuary. The culprit could be still more efficiently preserved if a woman consented to marry him. Numerous examples of this supreme salvation are quoted by mediæval historians.

THE GUILLOTINE.

The French Revolution, which made all citizens equal before the law, gave them the same privilege before death. On January 21, 1790, the following decree was published: 'In all cases of capital sentence, the punishment shall affect a single form, whatever may be the nature of the crime: the criminal shall be decapitated, and the execution shall take place by means of a special apparatus.' This machine, which was to bear the name, not of its inventor, but of Doctor Guillotin, who had improved it, was the *guillotine*. This zealous citizen, impelled by a humane sentiment which merely aimed at abridging decapitation, and depriving it of much of its physical suffering, had only perfected a machine known in Italy since 1507 under the name of *mannaia*. When Doctor Guillotin proposed this form of death to the Constituent Assembly, he was much laughed at; but his suggestion was eventually adopted. The machine was constructed in the following manner, and it has been but slightly altered since: On a scaffold from seven to eight feet high two parallel bars are made fast at one end; their top part is united by a strong cross-

bar. To this cross-bar is added a thick iron ring, in which is passed a rope which fixes and retains a ram. This is perpendicularly armed with a sharp and broad blade, which gradually becomes broader on all its surface, so that instead of striking perpendicularly, it strikes sideways, so that there is not an inch of the blade that does not serve. The ram weighs from sixty to eighty pounds, and its weight is doubled when it begins to slide down. It is enclosed in the groove of the bars. A spring makes it fast to the left bar; a band of iron descends along the outside of this same bar, and the handle is locked to a ring with a padlock, so that no accident is possible, and the weight only falls when the executioner interferes. To a weigh-plank strong straps are fastened, by which the criminal is attached under the armpits and over the legs, so that the body cannot move. As soon as the weigh-plank goes down, the head, being between the bars, is supported by a rounded cross-bar, the executioner's assistants lower another rounded cross-bar, the head being thus grooved in a perfect circle, which prevents it from moving in any way. This precaution is indispensable, in regard to the terrible inconveniences of fear. The executioner then touches the spring. The whole affair is done so quickly that only the thump of the blade when it slides down informs the spectators that the culprit is no longer of the living. The head falls into a basket full of bran, and the body is pushed into another wicker basket lined with very thick leather.

Although the guillotine was the common instrument of death, according to the law, hanging was frequently resorted to during the Revolution. 'A la lanterne!' was a well-known cry. It signified hanging from a gibbet to which was attached a lantern. Foulon, the Councillor of State, was the first who suffered in this way.[1] But the lantern was rather the instrument of summary justice.

[1] The Abbé Maury was once pursued by a mob, who cried 'À la lanterne!' 'Do you think you can see the clearer for putting me in the

JUDICIAL ORDEALS AND TORTURES.

In their search for the truth our ancestors often trusted to hazard, and soon persuaded themselves that its decrees came from the Divinity. The duel or *judicial combat* was instituted at the time of the invasion of the barbarians. The law of Burgundy decreed the duel when the parties would not abide by the primitive test of oath. Feudalism extended judicial combat; women, children, and priests were bound to bring forth a champion to sustain their cause by arms. The ordeal which at first only consisted in a struggle, was afterwards attended with solemn and specified formalities. It was preceded by a challenge, uttered before the tribunal; the person who asked for a judicial duel, threw down a glove as a gage of battle. The judges who ordered the duel were bound to see it out. The champions, before coming to blows, swore on the cross and missal not to have recourse to magic in the just quarrel they were about to fight for. The weapons differed according to classes: serfs were armed with a stick or a knife, and had a shield of leather called *canevas*; squires used only sword and shield. The conquered was regarded as condemned by judgment of Heaven, and an ignominious death awaited him if he did not perish by the blows of his opponent. In certain cases men, as well as women and children, could defer a quarrel to champions. In 591, Goutray ordered one of his chamberlains and one of his gamekeepers, who charged each other with having killed a buffalo, to fight in the lists. The chamberlain's champion and the gamekeeper killed each other. The chamberlain, duly convicted of the crime by the death of his champion, was chained to a post and stoned. In certain cases a combat between a man and an animal was permitted. The

place of a lantern?' said he, coolly. A general burst of laughter followed this sally, which saved his life. It was by the hand of this prelate that I was confirmed.—S.

judicial duel was authorised in civil and criminal actions. St. Louis attempted to substitute for it proof by witnesses; and from the time of Philippe Auguste as late as the seventeenth century, the duel could only take place with the permission of the King.

One of the most celebrated instances of these judicial combats was that of Jarnac and La Chataigneraie in 1547, under the reign of Henry II., when Jarnac cut his antagonist's ham by a blow which remained famous.

The so-called ordeals by the elements were four in number:

1. *The ordeal of the cross*, in use in France at the beginning of the ninth century, consisted in holding out one's arms cross-shape as long as possible during divine service. He who retained this position the longest had the better of his opponent. In his will Charlemagne ordered that the judgment of the cross should be resorted to in all quarrels that might arise out of the division of his states between his children.

2. *Ordeal by fire* was one of the most solemn. When it applied to writings the books were thrown into the fire, and the orthodoxy or the falseness of their contents were judged by the manner in which the works suffered the ordeal. When the ordeal was applied to men, two piles, of which the flames touched each other, were erected side by side. The accused, with the Host in his hand, rapidly traversed the flames, and if he succeeded in accomplishing the perilous journey, he was declared innocent. Among the most noteworthy examples of this kind of judgment, which also consisted in burning the feet of the accused, or in exposing them bare before an ardent brazier, I may quote Pierre Barthélemy, who pretended, at the time of the first crusade, that he had found the spike of the holy lance; charged with falsehood, he crossed through the flames with the Host in his hands, and accomplished the test successfully—but it is said that he died shortly after.

3. *Ordeal by cold or boiling water.*—The first of these tests was generally applied to people of low condition. The prisoner

heard mass, after which the priest made him kiss the cross and the gospel, and finally sprinkled him with holy water. He was then undressed, his right hand was tied to his left foot, and he was thrown into the water. If he went to the bottom, as was natural, he was reputed innocent; if, on the other hand, he remained at the surface, it was said that the water would not take him, and he was considered guilty. *Ordeal by boiling water* consisted in placing a cauldron full of water on a large fire; when the water was in a state of ebullition it was taken away from the flames, a rope was tied above it to which was suspended a ring, or any other object, which was then lowered into the water at different depths. At the first ordeal, the accused had only to plunge his hand to catch hold of the ring; at the second ordeal he plunged the arm up to the elbow; and at the third all the arm. When the ordeal was accomplished, the sufferer's arm was inserted in a bag on which the judge imprinted his seal, which was broken three days after, and then, if any mark of burning was still apparent, the accused was declared guilty; in the other case he was absolved.

4. *Ordeal by warm, hot, and red-hot iron.*—This ordeal consisted in taking with the hand a heated iron, or in walking with bare feet on burning iron. In the middle ages noblemen and priests had recourse to it. The accused, after fasting for three days, attended mass, and was led to the part of the church where the ordeal was to take place; there he took the iron which had been more or less heated, according to the gravity of the crime; he raised it two or three times, or carried it more or less far, according to the sentence. As in the preceding test, his hand was thrust into a bag, and was sealed for three days, and if it was without scar the accused was declared innocent. Ordeal by red-hot iron consisted in putting on a red-hot iron gauntlet, or in walking on iron bars, of which the usual number was nine, but which could be extended to twelve.

Ordeals founded on the belief that God always proved the innocence of the accused by a miracle were abandoned in the

thirteenth century, when St. Louis declared that combat was not a proof of right, and substituted evidential proof for judicial tests. The traces of this institution, however, existed until the sixteenth century.

There can be no doubt that torture was the result of the ancient superstition which had given birth to judicial ordeals. Torture comprised certain graduated torments inflicted upon a prisoner either to compel him to confess his crime, or to obtain the names of his accomplices. While he was subjected to these sufferings, a judge, standing close to the torturer or *questionnaire*, called upon the accused to say the truth, and wrote down his declarations, whence the name of *question* which was given to torture. *Question* was of two sorts, either *definite* or *preliminary*. These two categories were subdivided into *question ordinaire* and *extraordinaire*. Through the first it was sought to exact from the accused the confession of his guilt; through the second it was endeavoured to discover the names of the accomplices who had helped him in the perpetration of his crime. Torment carried to a certain limit constituted *question ordinaire;* it was doubled in *question extraordinaire*, which, as a rule, was only inflicted upon culprits previously sentenced to death.

Torturers had multiplied the instruments of punishment. Further it may be seen that each provincial parliament had its particular infliction, from which it could not depart. I shall begin by dwelling on the more general species of tortures, in which water, wood, fire, and iron were always used.

Torture by *water* consisted in seating the culprit on a stone stool, after his sentence had been read to him. His wrists were attached behind his back to two iron rings distant from each other. All the cords then entwined round his limbs and body were then pulled as much as possible, and when the body of the sufferer could not be stretched any more, a trestle was placed under his back. The *questionnaire* held a horn in one hand, and with the other he poured water in, and obliged the

criminal to swallow four pints in *question ordinaire*, and eight pints in *question extraordinaire*.

The *boot* was an instrument consisting of four planks, between which the sufferer's leg was pressed. The planks were pierced with holes, through which ropes were passed, so as to press the planks together. The executioner then drove wedges between the planks with a mallet, thus compressing and even breaking the limbs of the culprit. Ordinary torture included four wedges; eight wedges were used in *question extraordinaire*.

The Parliament of Paris applied only two kinds of torture, by water and boot. In Brittany, the sufferer was tied to an iron chair, while his legs were brought by degrees in contact with the fire. At Rouen, the thumb and another finger, or the leg, were compressed; at Besançon, the horse, which consisted in a piece of wood garnished with spikes, on which the culprit was placed astride, was generally used. At Autun torture was inflicted by pouring boiling oil on the feet. Estrapade prevailed at Orleans.

France was the country in which torture prevailed the longest. A declaration, dated October 24, 1780, abolished preparatory question, and another decree (March 1, 1788) did away with torture altogether.

THE EXECUTIONER.

In the primitive times of French society, the man on whom devolved the sad mission of putting criminals to death, or exacting confession by torture, took the name of Executioner of High Justice, because high judges and also royal judges alone had the right to pass sentence of death. In 1323 executioners were also designated as *commissaires spiculateurs*. It was only under Louis XI. that the epithet of *Bourreau* was applied to the executioner. Before the Revolution he was considered as a servant of the State, and held letters patent

signed by the King. Custom had established a degree of hierarchy in the profession. When the King had chosen a new executioner, the letters of nomination were thrown on the table by the wax-chafers of the high chancellor's office, and the executioner was to pick them up. The custom was abolished in 1645, and the title of executioner was given from hand to hand to the holder. The headsman was sworn before the court of his place of residence, and was nominated after ample information had been obtained concerning his habits, conduct, and piety. As a rule he was not allowed to reside in town, unless he took up his residence in the house of pillory, which was assigned to him as his quarters.

In certain localities he wore a costume consisting in a jacket bearing the arms of the town, with a ladder embroidered on the breast, and a gibbet on the back. The office of executioner was not in France, as in Spain, strictly hereditary; but for many reasons not difficult to imagine, it will be readily understood that the function seldom passed out of a family when they had once got into it. This respect of direct and legitimate succession went so far as to admit of a kind of minority in the monopoly of the scaffold, and this led to a decision of which the sacrilegious horror was not probably realised by the magistrates who were responsible for it. I said before that in 1726, after the death of one of my ancestors, Charles Sanson, his son Charles Jean-Baptiste Sanson was called upon to take his place at the age of seven. An assistant executioner named Prudhomme was entrusted with his functions, in regard to his youth, but it was required that he should sanction every execution by standing beside his assistant.

When the executioner had only daughters, his son-in-law was expected to take his place after death. Thus it was that the dismal office came down to me through six generations.

If the office of executioner, during the middle ages and under the Monarchy, was deprived of honour, it was in return invested with many pecuniary privileges. The executioner's

chief right was that of *havée* (from *avoir*, to have). This right consisted in taking as much of the corn sold in the market as he could take with his hands. This privilege had been granted to the executioner to help him in his personal wants, and to save him the trouble of buying provisions, which he could not easily procure otherwise, many people declining to receive money which came from such hands as his. The executioner could employ assistants to collect his tax; and the number of men he was led to engage for the purpose all but absorbed all his profits. In consequence of this, his right in certain towns was exchanged for a yearly allowance of money. In a letter addressed to the authorities by Tardiveau, the local executioner, the writer complains that he is obliged to employ a regular army of assistants in collecting *havée*. So as to distinguish those who had paid him from his other debtors, the executioner or his assistants marked them on the shoulder or elbow with white chalk. This brought on riots and seditions; and, moreover, as the right of *havée*, or rather the manner of exercising it, caused rising discontent, it was at last replaced by an increase of salary.

Many other privileges were attached to the office besides that which I have mentioned. By an order of the Châtelet, dated 1530, the executioner of Paris had a right of taxation on fruit, grapes, nuts, hay, eggs, and wool; also a toll on the Petit-Pont, a tax on barges, a sum for each patient suffering from leprosy, a sum on brooms, coals, oysters, fish, cakes of Epiphany, water-cress sellers, and on stray pigs. When one of his servants captured a pig, he took it to the Hôtel-Dieu, and either the head or a sum of money was given in return. The executioner had also a right to a part of the apparel of the culprits who suffered by his hands; at first only clothes below the waist were given him, but eventually he obtained the whole apparel.

In certain cities the executioner levied a tax on women of loose life. The monks of Saint-Martin gave him five loaves

and five bottles of wine for every execution that took place on their lands; those of Saint Geneviève paid him five sols yearly in lieu of right of *havée*; and on St. Vincent Day the abbot of Saint Germain-des-Près gave him a pig's head, and assigned to him a prominent place in the procession of the abbey.

The executioner also received a sum of money for each execution.

In 1721 all the rights appertaining to the office were abolished, and the emoluments of the executioner were fixed at 16,000 livres; and up to 1793 the execution of capital sentences was entrusted to the three following functionaries:

1. The *executioner.*
2. The *questionnaire.*
3. The *carpenter.*

All punishments followed by death concerned the executioner. Besides his salary of 16,000 livres, he received special fees for executions outside the walls of Paris. All his expenses were defrayed. His assistants were of two sorts: 1. The sons of provincial executioners, unpaid, but fed and boarded. 2. The servants, who also acted in the capacity of private domestics to the executioner.

The *questionnaire* was sometimes the son or relative of the executioner. He inflicted *question ordinaire* and *extraordinaire*, and also preliminary torture.

If one is to judge by the salary (from 40,000 to 50,000 francs), the office of *carpenter* was a profitable one. The carpenter's business was to construct, repair, and keep in order scaffolds and instruments of punishment.

In 1793 the National Convention completely altered the position of public executioners. By a decree issued on June 13, 1793, it was decided that an executioner should be attached to each department of the Republic. The salary of executioners was to be paid by the State. In towns of which the population did not exceed 50,000 inhabitants, the salary was fixed at 2,400 livres; in those numbering from 50,000 to

100,000 inhabitants, at 4,000 livres ; and, lastly, the emoluments of the executioner of Paris were diminished from 16,000 to 10,000 livres. His assistants were paid on the same scale. During the Reign of Terror, however, a special fee of 8,000 francs was added to his salary. It was not too much for what he had to do then.

The last reform in the position of executioners was enacted in 1849, when the salary of the executioner of Paris was lowered to 5,000 francs; the executioner of Lyons received 4,000 francs ; those of Bordeaux, Rouen, and Toulouse, 3,000 francs, and the gang of less important headsmen, each 2,400 francs. It will be seen that we are far from the time when M. de Paris collected 50,000 francs only for his right of *havée*. It is well to remark that no more letters patent are held by executioners ; that the salary has become a kind of petty stipend ; and the conclusion indicated by this state of things is that when occupations of the kind I have described gradually lose in importance, the time is not distant when they shall disappear altogether.

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